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Apr-Jun 2018

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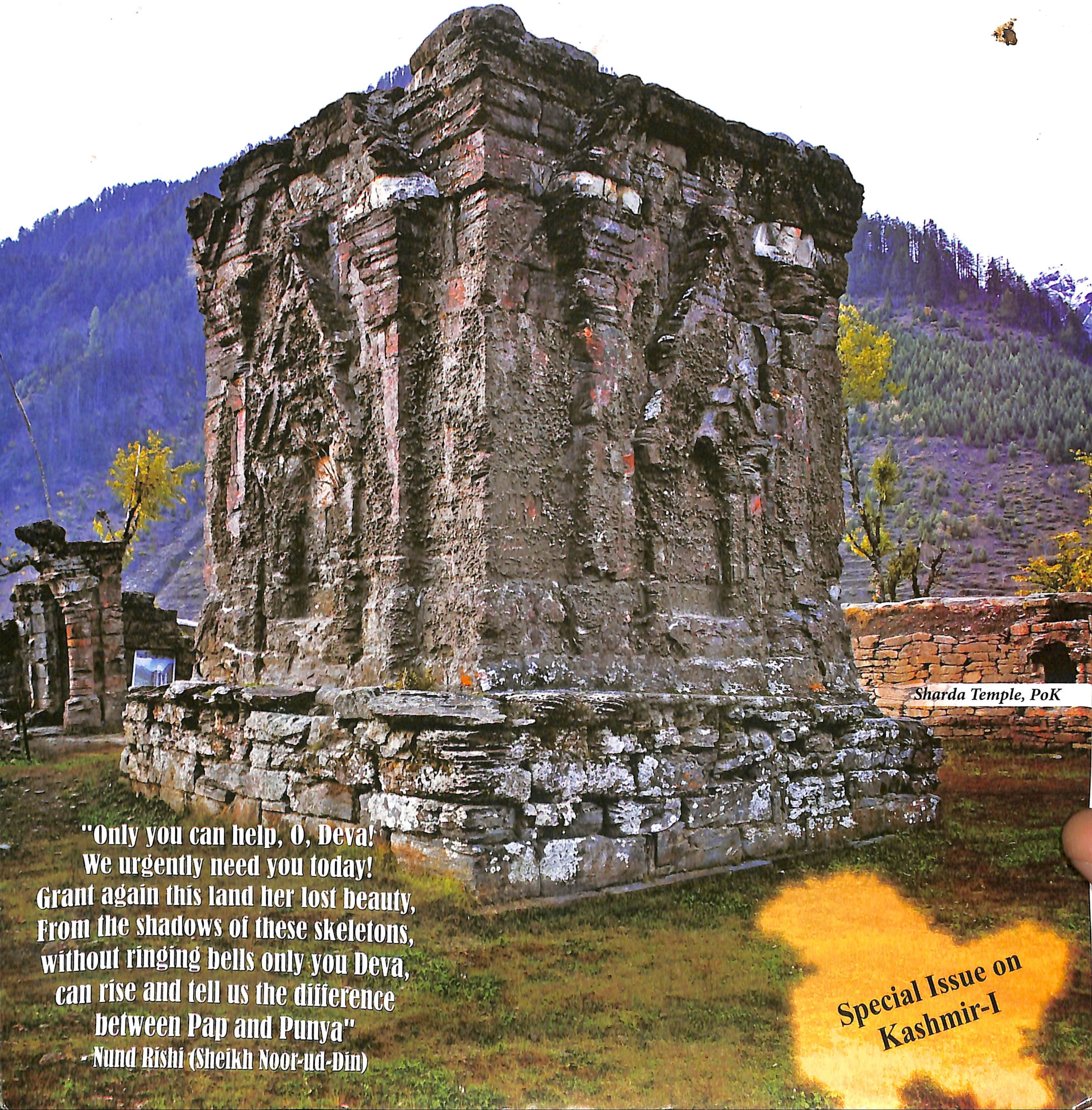

Sharda Temple, PoK

"Only you can help, O, Deva!
We urgently need you today!
Grant again this land her lost beauty,
From the shadows of these skeletons,
without ringing bells only you Deva,
can rise and tell us the difference
between Pap and Punya"
- Nund Rishi (Sheikh Noor-ud-Din)

Special Issue on
Kashmir-I

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Journal of Social and Academic Activism

Year-39, Issue-2 Apr-Jun 2018

Special Issue on Kashmir-I

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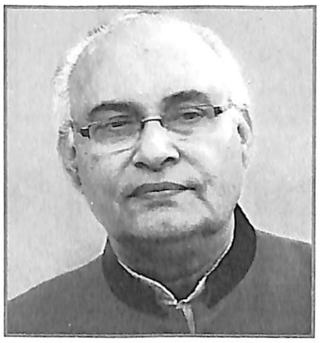


Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma

The true identity of Kashmir

This is the third issue of the resumed publication of Manthan and the second issue in English because the Deendayal Upadhyaya second special issue could not be translated. As a result, we are combing the January-March issue of this year into the April-June edition of the journal. Only then are we able to justify this issue as the second one of the 39th year of publication. I hope our readers will forgive us for this.

The present issue is a special issue on Kashmir. The narrative on Kashmir has been entangled in religious parallels and the history of the region has been analysed in such a way that highlights only the religious conflict, but in no way expounds on the original, historical and accurate characteristics of Kashmir.

The true identify of what is Kashmir does not get highlighted, neither does its deep connection with the life-blood of Bharatiya thought and philosophy, which emanates from the origin source of the Himalayas and merges in the Indian Ocean. Thus, the origin of Kashmir is in a way linked deeply with that of the Indian peninsula. It is very important that we understand this fact properly and in its true sense, to be able to do justice to our present.

The way the words Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh are being used needs to be corrected and set straight. There is the requirement of understanding foreign invasions and forced religious conversions, as well as the need to understand the beliefs and practices of Indian religions.

Comparing converted Hindus with foreign invaders and believing in their sects as a parallel to those of the compatible Hindus, is the basic weakness of the discourse on Kashmir at present. In the same way, comparing Semitic culture's idea of religion with different Indian sects - Buddhist, Sikh, Vaishnava etc - is also grave intellectual mirage.

We do not claim that the articles included in this present issue bring out a change in this constant narrative. However, we have attempted to move in this direction, and we expect it to gain momentum in the coming days.

A team of experts from research and editing has worked very hard for publishing this special issue. We have received active support and advice of Padmashri Jawaharlal Kaul as the guest editor and I express my personal gratitude to him and the team.

This special issue on Kashmir will be published in two parts and the first part is in your hands. It covers the narrative from ancient to medieval Kashmir. The next issue will take off from the first and end with a review of contemporary Kashmir.

I look forward to receiving your comments and encouragement.

mahesh.chandra.sharma@live.com

Jawaharlal Kaul
Guest Editor

The dialogue on Kashmir needs a new narrative

I had an encounter with an Italian lady who teaches philosophy in an Italian University. During our conversation I asked her that what was being thought in her country about Kashmir. In her reply, the Italian Professor related a classroom incident. There was a day when she decided that it would be good to acquaint her students with some elements of eastern philosophy as well. She began with Abhinavgupta and with him referred to Shaivite Philosophy of Kashmir. She had just discussed some aspects when a student, who was among the brilliant ones, stood up and asked, "Madam! Is this about the same Kashmir we read about in the newspapers, cross-firing, stone pelting, skirmishes on the borders etc." "It was difficult to make him understand that it of course was the same Kashmir, but its philosophical and cultural essence is lost somewhere in the present..." said the professor.

Italy is a far away country. But if the same question was asked in some corner of our country as well, would it be out of place? What could be our answer?

A boy of tender age, throwing stones at security forces in Kashmir, can also ask which Kashmir are you talking about? He knows only that Kashmir, which is five hundred years old, and has been badly defaced for last seven to eight decades. Nobody has bothered to let the boy know about the glorious legacy that his ancestors left for him and the stones he throws are at his own identity.

The so-called Kashmir problem emerged out of imposed concepts and blatant lies and has become more and more complicated with the passage of time. This has developed into a disastrous psychological deviation, which beyond doubt is widespread in the state and has created serious misconceptions outside the state as well. The youth who are bent upon killing and getting killed may be pursuing a religious myth, but those who feast on this performance of bloodshed do not hold stone pelters in any esteem. What is of consequence for them is falling of a student to a police or Army bullet which becomes a news headline and grants oxygen to their games of death.

It is a matter of genuine surprise that the parents fail to stop their tender aged son from plunging into the jaws of death. I got the answer when a Muslim friend came to me with a request to help find a suitable match from outside the state for his well-educated daughter. He said that he could do anything to provide every comfort to his daughter, but it was impossible to ensure that the potential groom was not in the stranglehold of a terrorist group or was not a government informer. It is not impossible only for those Indian communities who were turned into minorities including Shias, but for some Sunnis as well, to live in Kashmir without absolute surrender of their self-esteem. When India became free in 1947 the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir never wanted a separate nation. Their own state, their faith and the cultural identity granted by the Rishi cult of Kashmir was enough for them. If at all they had any complaint that was only about local needs, land, trade, employment and never about Hindu-Muslim divide. The youth who are being pushed into the fire of violence, are never told by anybody that the so-called movement had never been their own nor had they ever started it. The association that was constituted to liberate Kashmir from the Maharaja had two Punjabi Muslims at the helm of affairs, who never thought it necessary to consult any Kashmiri for the purpose, nor did they make any Kashmiri Muslim an office bearer of the association even as a token gesture. They had to use the people of Jammu and Kashmir to further their pan-Indian communal politics. Does anybody tell a guinea pig why it is being fed and nursed!

Their motives too were different. One of them wanted to dissolve Jammu & Kashmir into greater Punjab and thus rob Jammu & Kashmir of its identity and the other one wanted to deprive them of their traditional religion and folk culture. Muslim League's Mohammed Iqbal, who even before presentation of the resolution for Pakistan, wanted to put in front of the British, an alternative to constitute a greater Muslim State extending from Kashmir to the border of Afghanistan. The ruler of Kashmir was a big hurdle in the path. Then there was Ahmadiya Mirza Bashiruddin Mehmood, who in the face of serious impediments in the path of his new cult, dreamt of making Kashmir an Ahmadiya Paradise.

It was not the dream of the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir, but the cherished aspiration of some other powers, imposed on the Muslims of the state. Sheikh Abdullah is considered the leader of this movement. But even after many years from 1931, the resolutions passed by the sheikh were never considered passed unless approved from Lahore. That movement from day one was in the hands of non-Kashmiri leaders because the dream was theirs and for them only. The separatism that was put forth as the fate of Kashmiris was never the legacy they had inherited nor is it today.

The seeds of separatism were sown the day when freedom was interpreted as synonymous with dethroning of the Maharaja for the sole reason that he was a Hindu. The only possible logical consequence could be a movement against a Hindu majority Jammu which with the passage of time could develop into a separatist movement against India and Bharatiyata.

The Indian leadership in its utter ignorance encouraged the process or due to its immaturity shot arrows in the dark. It has been so unfortunate that after 1947, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has fallen prey not only to the machinations of others but also to the lack of policy of its own people. How on one hand, could we encourage the very concept that sowed the seeds of terrorism and violence in Kashmir, and on the other hand expect peace and amity in return! It makes no sense to gather thistles and expect pickles. The discourse that democracy and secularism were disastrous for Muslims was propounded by Iqbal. The discourse laid such a path to tread for Jammu and Kashmir that would never lead to democracy and leave no space for secularism.

These fallacious concepts have developed into such a kind of dialogue regarding Jammu and Kashmir that instead of correcting the mistakes, it keeps creating newer and newer myths. Blatant lies about the full and final accession of Jammu and Kashmir are spread. Vicious propaganda based on false data is circulated in international fora. In collusion with the most faithful of the British crown, the Governor General Lord Mountbatten stopped the Indian Army from completely liberating Kashmir from the invading tribal hordes. In effect, this and the deep-seated rivalries within the politics of Kashmir being described as Jihad in the name of Islam – all together constitutes the crux of the problem. These fallacies and misconceptions need to be eradicated.

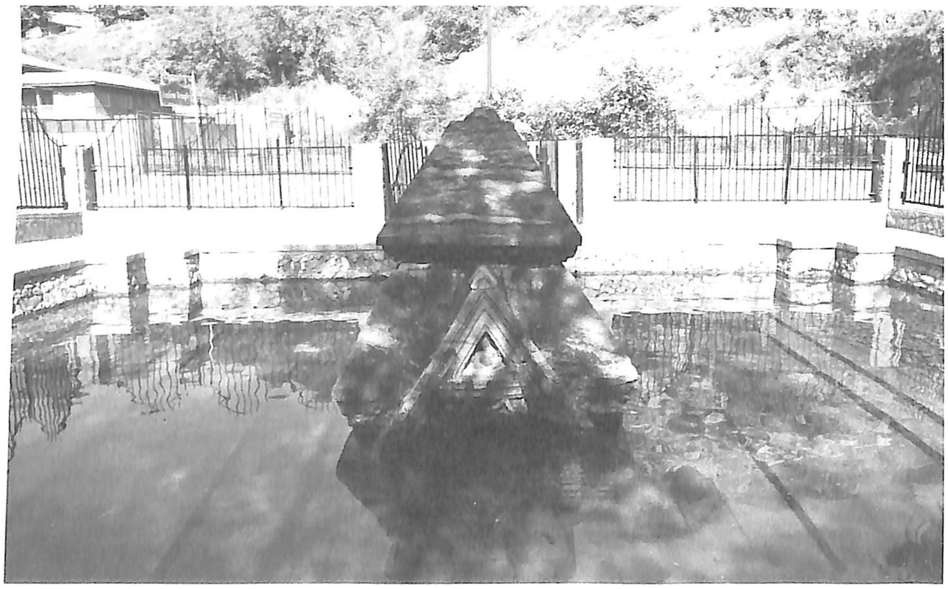
We need not go too far. What is needed is to remember our legacy, to explore our history, to spread the bright light of our ancient intellectual achievements. We must make that cultural journey of three thousand years a living continuity again, we must rejuvenate that endeavor of glorious centuries undertaken by our ancestors, that set up of extraordinary standards in history, dharma, philosophy, language, literature, art and architecture. We need to understand those philosophical principals which today, have become relevant not only for us, but for the whole world. This issue of Manthan is aimed at churning those thoughts and concepts about Jammu and Kashmir, which amid the current clamour about the state, stand out and throw up a new discourse, paving the way for a fresh dialogue, that instead of distracting the common people, inspires them for an enthusiastic journey towards their cultural goal. That discourse must enable an interaction with Nilmat Purana that mirrors our glorious past.

That discourse should be rooted in Rajatarangini in which flows the incessant river of the kings who ruled the land, a multidimensional vision of Buddhist, Shaivite and Vaishnavite dharmas and philosophies should govern it or the essence of Lalleshwari, the mother of Kashmiri mystic poetry and the cultural inspiration of the Rishi cult of her disciple Nund Rishi should be at the core of it. This issue of Manthan presents an image of Kashmir that is as ancient as it is modern. We must see the real picture of Kashmir. As the picture becomes clear it will be easy to comprehend and their solutions will not be difficult to find.

This mirror of history presents such an image of society where there were no cult wars and no friction between different lines of thought. Emperor Lalitaditya, despite being a Vaishnavite, built Shaiva temples and Buddhist monasteries for the monks coming to Kashmir from foreign lands. A king who was a follower of a cult would easily give donations to the temples of other cults or facilitate their construction. Every thought was acceptable, and none was condemnable.

The place where knowledge was the greatest asset, where the doors of knowledge were ever open for anybody, irrespective of caste creed and colour, where dedicated spiritual practice called Sadhana was a way of life, and not an imposed ritual, where every form of nature was worshipped and a woman was taken as a form of the divine mother Shakti, the feminine incarnation of power, where the excellence of thought was determined through dialogue and the discontent of the people was expressed through passive resistance. That was the sacred region addressed as Jammu & Kashmir today which is not only an integral part of India geographically, but socially, politically and culturally as well. This picture of Jammu and Kashmir is different and is from yesteryears, but still it is ours. We are overwhelmed with the dark night of ignorance and fanaticism.

A new discourse will bring forth a new dawn and a new chapter will be written in history. This issue of Manthan is a step in that direction. There was a sizeable volume of the content to put in front of you that went beyond the limits of this issue. We reserve that for the next issue. ■



Submerged ancient Shiva temple at Manasbal Lake (Photo courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

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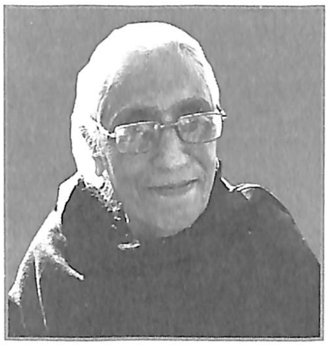


Prof. Ved Kumari Ghai

Nilamata Purana of Kashmir

Nilamata Purana is a sub-purana of Kashmir written in Puranic style, with very interesting information about the ancient culture of Kashmir. Kalhana mentions in Rajatarangini that he took the names of first four kings of Kashmir from Nilamata which is the evidence of the fact that Nilamata contained genealogies of kings as well. The available manuscripts do not have the names of three kings and one of these shows just one name - Bala Gonanda. Leaving aside some portions of genealogies must have been the practice even before Kalhana and that would have pushed some parts of the original history contained in Nilamata into oblivion. Replying to a query from Janamejaya, Vaishampayana says that sometime before Mahabharata war, King Jarasandha had called his relative King Gonanda of Kashmir to lend his hand in the war against Yadavas. Gonanda was killed by Balrama and his son Damodara was put to death by Krishna. Shri Krishna understood the importance of the land of Kashmir and handed over the throne of Kashmir to Damodara's pregnant wife Yashowati. Her son Bala Gonanda was just an infant at the time of the war of Mahabharata, so he did not go to the war.

Vaishampayana explains Kashmir as a form of the divine mother Uma, who from the beginning of the aeon (Kalpa), up to six Manvantaras remained in form of a lake.[1] In the Vaivasvata Manvantara, that is the era when Vaiavaswata Manu, Devas, Nagas and Daityas were born. When Garuda began to annihilate Nagas, Vishnu granted a sanctuary for them in Satisar and crowned Nila Naga as their king. After some time Jalodbhava, the demon, who had been granted the boon of immortality in water by Brahma, was born from Satisar. He began to wreak havoc on the dwellers of the adjoining areas.

Then King Nilnag prayed to sage Kashyap for succour who came and invoked gods to help. Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma along with other Gods arrived. Vishnu took his plough and broke open a part of the wall created by Himalaya and ordered him to drain out all water from Satisar. The water flowed out and plain ground appeared, exposing Jalodbhava. Vishnu took his chakra and severed Jalodbhava's head. Kashyapa urged upon Nagas and Manavas (humans) that they should live together in the area with love and compassion. Nagas did not agree and were cursed by the sage that if they did not want to live with Manavas then they could not escape living with Pishachas (the flesh-eating demons).

The unnerved Nagas prayed for relief which was granted, and the curse was modified. Nagas had to spend six months of the year with Pishachas and the other six months with Manavas for a period

Nilamata Purana provides an invaluable account of social and religious life of ancient Kashmir. Rajatarangini refers mainly to the life of monarchs, queens and their ministers and officials of four years. They could live with Manavas only when the period of the curse was over.[2] Four years passed and King Nila Naga conveyed to Brahmin Chandradeva, who had settled there, that from then onwards they did not need to leave Kashmir for six months. They could live there in the winter season as well provided they worshiped Naga deities also and recognised specific religious occasions and festivals.

This dialogue given in Nilamata is significant in the sense that it records about 65 fasts, festivals and other auspicious days, most of which are prevalent in other parts of our country as well

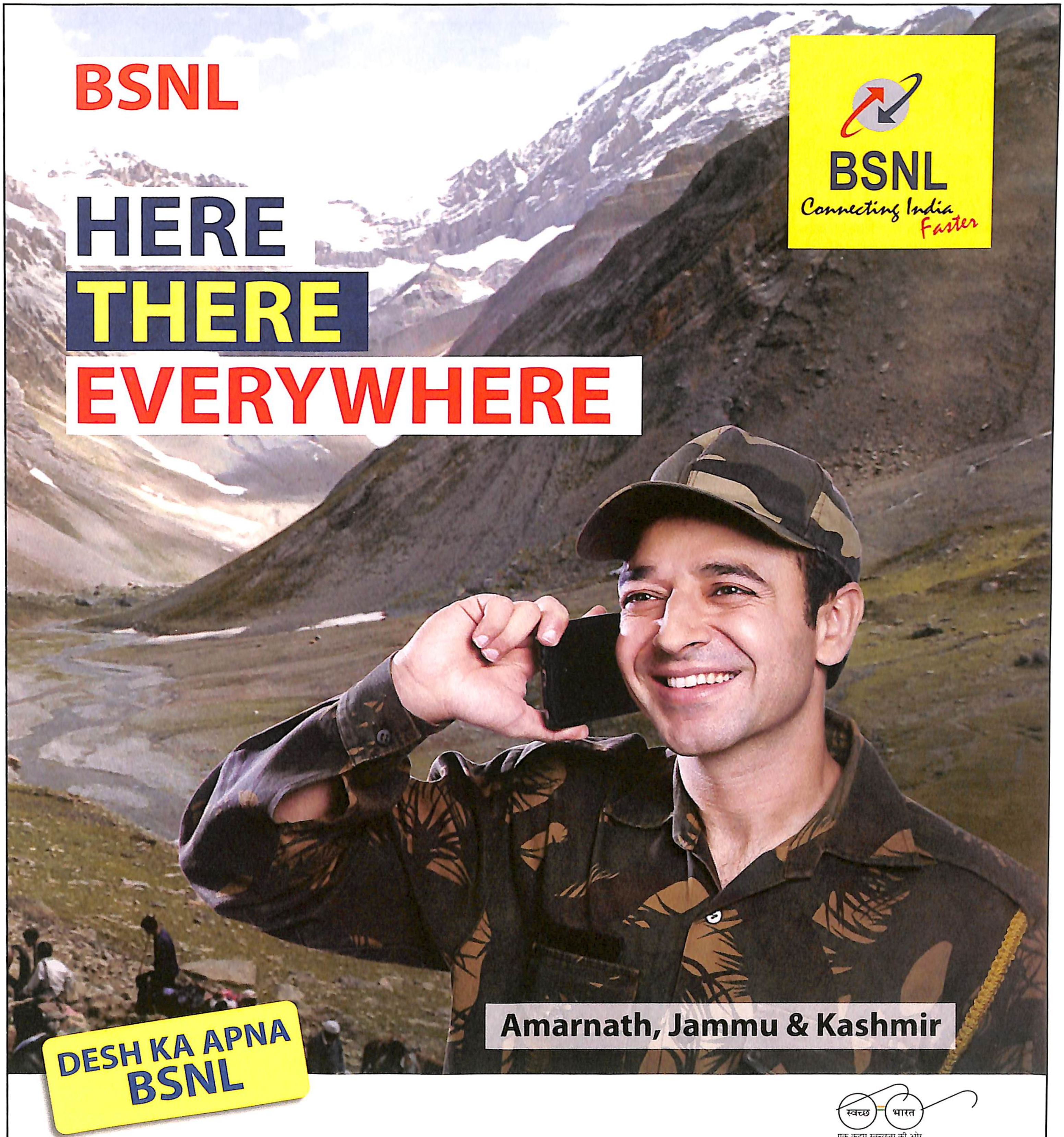
This dialogue given in Nilamata is significant in the sense that it records about 65 fasts, festivals and other auspicious days, most of which are prevalent in other parts of our country as well. Some festivals like Navahimpatotsava, Pishacha Chaturdashi, Vitasta Janmotsava (the birthday of river Vitasta) etc. are celebrated in Kashmir only. While giving names of many Nagas it has been said that there are so many Naga dwellers in Kashmir that their names cannot be recited even in hundred years. Nilamata tells us about the existence of many Shaiva and Vaishnava shrines in Kashmir and gives a detailed account of the grandeur of three shrines – Bhutshvara, Kapateshvara and Ashramaswami. The book ends with the eulogies of the sacred river Vitasta.

Nilamata tells us about the legend of Satisar that deals with the origin of the land of Kashmir. This legend is in accordance with the modern geological facts. The bowl-shaped structure of the valley and the presence of a range of plain layers of clay and sand up to 2000 feet from the base level of the valley substantiate the fact that a vast lake existed there at some point of time in the past. Maneck B. Pithwala in his book '*Kashmir: Its Geology and Geography*' (Page-119) and G.E.L. Carter in his book '*Stone Age*' in Kashmir (Page 49) also have expressed the same view.

Undated image of Kashmiri Pandits with some manuscripts. (Photo courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

Nilamata describes the geography of India as well. Mountains and rivers of North India, central and south India is described. Every place on the land of Kashmir is considered sacred and the book is replete with the descriptions of such places. The four lists given in the latter half of the book bear special significance from the point of view of geography of Kashmir. The first list contains the names of 603 Nagas. The second one lists the shrines of Shiva and the associated deities. The third list includes the shrines of Vishnu. The fourth list assumes special importance as it begins with Nila Naga in the east, followed by river Vitasta and its tributaries and reaches the narrow pathway of Baramulla, describing throughout the course in geographical order, the existence of various shrines. These lists are the treasure houses of information regarding the shrines of Kashmir. But these descriptions are very brief, and the shrines not described in the Rajatarangini or any other book. The names of tirthas of Kashmir are amazing like those found in other parts of India. This shows that the people who came from other parts of India and made Kashmir their home, named those exquisitely beautiful places of Kashmir after the tirthas they were familiar with. For example, the confluence of Sindhu and Vitasta was named as Prayaga after the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna.[3] The place that extends from Trikotisangama to Raupeshvara Hara and from Pavana and Rajobinduvinirmala to Chirmochana has been called Varanasi.[4] Some tirthas of Kashmir described in Nilamata Purana, such as Chitrakuta, Bharatagiri, Kamatirtha, Kotitirtha, are the namesakes of the tirthas found in other parts of India.

About the dwellers of ancient Kashmir, Nilamata tells us that the original inhabitants of the land belonged to Naga race. Then came those who belonged to Pishacha race and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Join us on: facebook.com/cscscheme | csc spv | cscegov_ | www.csc.gov.in after them came the descendants of Manu from other parts of India. As per Grierson, Pishachas belonged to a tribe that lived in north-western area of India and spoke Pishachis language. Some events depicted in Ramayana and Mahabharata bear testimony to the tribal character of Nagas.[5]

The Nilamata Purana provides an invaluable account of the social and religious life of ancient Kashmir. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana, Jonaraja, Shrivara refer mainly to the life of monarchs, queens and their ministers and officials, while as Nilamata is centred around the common people who live not in palaces but in ordinary houses, move in lanes and markets, rejoice in garden, performs pilgrimages to tirthas and offer prayers in temples. While describing the time of ripening of grapes, Nilamata says that when the grapes become ripe, people should go with women, friends and servants to the vineyards and worship Goddess Shamadevi with flowers, incense and make offerings of foodstuff. Then there should be celebrations with song and dance. First, the grapes should be offered to Brahmins and then the food stuffed with grapefruit should be taken.[6] River Vitasta is held in the highest esteem in Nilamata Purana. The birthday of Vitasta was celebrated for a period of seven days. It is celebrated on the 13 day of the Hindu month of Bhadrapada. The celebrations begin three days prior to the date and continues three days after it. As per Nilamata, theatre performances are customary during the three days that follow the date and the participating actors must be honoured.[7]

Regarding pilgrimages to various sacred places Nilamata says that when Pishacha king Nikumbha departs, the festivities of pilgrimages should be organised for six months. Chaturthi (the fourth day) is apt for the pilgrimages to the temples of Vinayaka, Dhanada and Mahadeva. Panchami (the fifth day) is good for the visit to the places of the deities Shri and Vakana, Shashti or the sixth date for Kumara, Saptami or the seventh date for Savita, Ashtami or eighth for Mahadeva and Shakra; and fifth, twelveth and the day of full moon purnamashi for all adobes of Naga deities. Pilgrimages to any sacred place can be undertaken on the day of Purnamashi. The idol of the deity must be given a bath with the water of a sacred place and then put on a decorated vehicle, under the leadership of a king or a chief, and taken out around the city in a procession. Theatrical performances should be held, and the spectators be honoured.[8]

The Nilamata Purana gives gleeful descriptions of Kashmiri women. On Kaumudi Mahotsav, women are seen absorbed in fire worship along with their husbands, children, servants and friends. In the feasts, organised on the occasions of seed-sowing (Bijaropana), women participate freely in dance performances.[9] On the day of Iramanjari Pujana women are worshipped with Irapushpa garlands made with red thread.[10] Ira is a flower still offered to Lord Shiva on Shivaratri, the main festival of Kashmir. It is called Virkin, pronounced as Virkim at some places. Women visit gardens and worship the trees laden with fruits. On many religious occasions, the custom of worshipping sisters and married women is followed. While performing various religious rituals, the women remained shoulder to shoulder with their husbands but in some rituals such as the worship of Dhandodeva, and giving a bath to the menstruating Goddess Kashmiraa, were performed on their own.[11] Such significant status of women is absent in other puranas.

Guests were always more than welcome in Kashmir. The King has been directed to honour the guests coming to Kashmir from other areas.[12] Friends were an integral part of all celebrations and on some occasions gifts were presented to their wives. It is worth noting that only in an open society it was possible for women to accept gifts from the friends of their husbands.

Nilamata Purana gives a vivid description of the geography along with social and religious life lived in ancient Kashmir. ■

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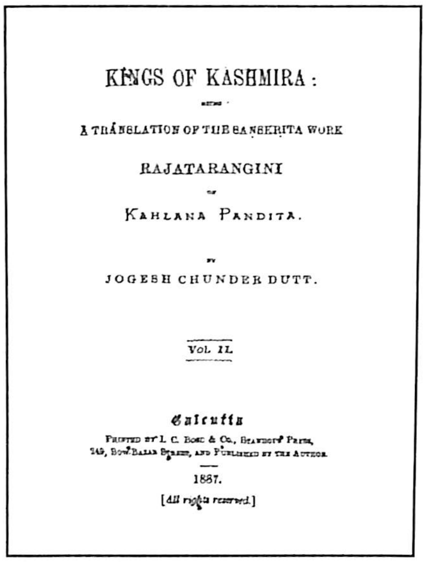
Kalhana: One of India's greatest historians

Kalhana, the most celebrated historian of ancient India leaves his reader in no doubt about his ancestry. In the publisher's imprint occurring at the end of each book of the Rajatarangini, Kalhana makes mention of himself as the son of the illustrious minister of Kashmir Lord Champaka. He also mentions with evident respect the name of one Kanka who was probably the uncle of Kalhana. Kanka's love for music brought him in close touch with king Harsha. After the death of Harsha, Kanka spent his days in pious resignation in Banaras.

The family heritage of Kalhana was noble par excellence. Deeply impressed by the life and character of his father, Kalhana was proud of his lineage. Jonaraja, the author of the second Rajatarangini, speaks of Kalhana as 'Dvija' meaning the 'twice born'. It was in classical tradition of Kashmiri Brahmins that Kalhana must have received his education and training. His father who was a minister must have made adequate arrangements for the education of his son.

So profound was the knowledge and scholarship of Kalhana that it did not only survive the political cataclysm but continued to inspire historical scholarship in Kashmir even in later times.



KINGS OF KASHMIRA:
BEING
A TRANSLATION OF THE SANSKRITA WORK
RAJATARANGINI
OF
KAHLANA PANDITA.
BY
JOGESH CHUNDER DUTT.

VOL. II.

Calcutta
PRINTED BY I. C. BOSE & CO., STANHOPE PRESS,
249, BOW BAZAR STREET, AND PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1887.
[All rights reserved.]

Jonaraja is full of esteem for Kalhana's scholarship. This shows that despite the lapse of 300 years between Kalhana's demise and Jonaraja's time, the memory of the former had not faded from the minds of his countrymen. Indeed, like a true Brahmin, Kalhana was devoted to learning. For this reason, he was all praise for such Brahmins as were real Pandits and scholars. On the contrary he was critical of the Brahmin organisations such as 'Purohita Parishads'. Kalhana had innate hatred also for those Brahmins who acted as temple priests, whose ignorance was equal to their arrogance.

Kalhana seems to have had full faith in transcendental doctrines based on Shaiva creed. He at the beginning of each Book addresses the praises to Shiva in his form of Ardhanarishvara.

These facts together with the lavish praises showered by Kalhana on Bhatta Kalatta, one of the chief exponents of Kashmiri Shaiva Sastras, are clear evidences to prove his faith in Shaivism. He visited several Shaiva shrines including the one in Nandiksetra, in the company of his father. Kalhana was fully conversant also with the Tantric cult which is closely associated with the Shaiva worship.

Kalhana seems also favourably disposed towards Buddhism. He praised king Meghavahana for prohibiting the slaughter of animals. He spoke of Bodhisatvas and even about the Buddha, the embodiment of compassion and love.

Kalhana was an accomplished poet. He practiced the art of writing Sanskrit classical poetry. He had deep knowledge of the Ramayana and was well acquainted with the Mahabharata. This is proved by the frequent references that he made to little known incidents of the gigantic epic – the Mahabharata. His knowledge of the important kavyas – Raghuvamsha and Meghadhuta – is a fact which on one has challenged.

- Manthan Desk

Utpal Kaul

The eight volumes of the Rajatarangini

The Rajatarangini is actually a treatise spread over eight volumes and spans hundreds of years of history, covering a vast variety of social, cultural and political developments in and around Kashmir.

In his first two volumes, Kalhana, who depended on legends and popular traditions, mentions that among the 52 lost kings of ancient Kashmir, four had been derived by him from the Nilamata. Gonanda-I and his successors who were contemporary of the Kauravas and the Pandvas ruled Kashmir during 2268 year in the Kaliyuga.

After Gonanda II 35 kings are missing because of the destruction of the records. Hasan, the historian of Kashmir (who wrote in Persian), however says that Zain-ul-abidin (1423-1447CE) got a translation of Rajatarangini done in Persian by Mullah Ahmad who was a poet laureate of his court. For this purpose a search for the Puranas and Rajataranginis of ancient writers was made on the instructions of the emperor. The names of more than 15 different Rajataranginis were known through this exercise. But the ruthless hands of Dulchu (1323 CE) and Sikandar (1393-1416 CE), the iconoclast had destroyed all old volumes.

One old Rajatarangini written on birch bark by one Pandit Ratnakara was obtained. It was also known as Ratnakara Purana. This work provided the account of 35 kings who ruled over Kashmir from the beginning of Kaliyuga. The source mentioned was not later on available even to Hasan. Because the copy of Mullah Ahmad's translation which he got in Rawalpindi was lost in a boat tragedy in which the life of Hasan was saved with great difficulty. Till date we have not found any other source to corroborate the statement of Hasan about the thirty-five lost kings. The view seems very interesting.

Among the many kings mentioned in Volume I after the 35 lost kings, Kalhana mentions one Asoka. But it becomes difficult to identify him with the Mauryan king of the same name, as observed by some scholars on the bases of the chronology and date given by Kalhana. Ashoka is mentioned to have founded the city of Srinagar, which Kalhana says was important on account of its 96 lakh of prosperous houses.

After Ashoka, his son Jalauka ascended the throne. Initially, he had seven ministers in his Council of Ministers, but he made changes by following the model of Yudhisthira prevailing in his territory. He introduced a council of 18 ministers. In the same Book, Kalhana also mentions Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka. Buddhism received great impetus during their rule. The name of Nagarjuna is also mentioned with great reverence. Abhimanyu,

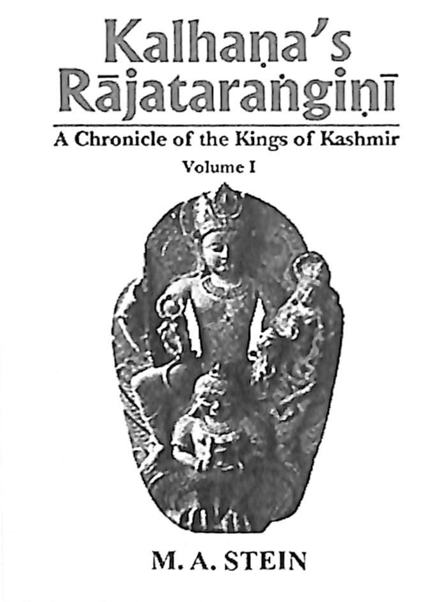
> Kalhana's Rajatarangini has not only dealt with political history, but also depicted the social, economic and religious conditions of contemporary Kashmir

Gonanda III and Nara who ruled in Kashmir find mention in this Volume. Also the inhuman rule of Mihirakula for 75 years.

In Volume II, Kalhana discusses the reign of kings such as Pratapaditya I, Tanjina, Jayendra, and Samdhimat. During the reign of Tanjina Kashmir witnessed the great famine. Kalhana, while describing the famine observes "Then came a terrible famine, which resembled the kind of hell, with the masses of starving people (moving about) like ghosts." But, he further mentions that king Tanjina did everything which was possible for him to help his subjects.

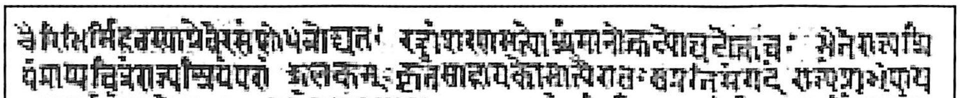
Volume III of Rajatarangini begins with the rule of Meghavahana who was living in exile at the court of Gandhara. Meghavahana was a staunch believer in the doctrine of 'Ahimsa' as preached by the Buddha. When he came to throne, he totally prohibited the slaughter of living beings. After the reign of Meghavahana, according to Kalhana, Kashmir was ruled over by Sresthasena, Hiranya, Pravarasena II (who founded the present city of Srinagar); Matrigupta, Yudhisthira II, Lahkhana, and Ranaditya. The latter, according to Kalhana, ruled for three hundred years. This statement gives us the clear impression that most of the portions up to Book III are legendary accounts. Other rulers mentioned in this Book are Vikramaditya and Baladitya.

Volume IV begins with the reign of Durlabhavardhana of the Karkota dynasty. Now onwards the account becomes more reliable in historical perspective. As we have numismatic evidence and Chinese Annals bearing on this period most probably. Xuan Xang visited Kashmir during this period. This dynasty witnessed the reign of Durlabhaka Pratapaditya II, Chandrapida, Tarapida, Lalitaditya, Kuvalayapida, Jayapida and other less important kings. Lalitaditya's reign was the landmark in the ancient history of Kashmir. Lalitaditya Mukhtapida was the first king of Kashmir whom Kalhana describes as Digvijayi. He was the first ruler of Kashmir who crossed the Vindhayas and subjugated seven Konkans and Karnata (modern Karnataka) in south India. His first conquest was on Yasovarman of Kanauj. According to Kalhana, Kanauj had become the courtyard of his palace.


Kalhaṇa's
Rājataraṅgiṇī
A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir
Volume I
M. A. STEIN

However, Jayapida's last days of reign were fraught with tyranny and he annexed the land of Brahmins. The Brahmins of Tulamula cursed the king for this and he died in greatest agony after ruling for 31 years. After Anandapida, the royal dynasty of the Karkotas came to an end. Whereas the descendants of Utpala's family obtained great might. After Utpalapida Avantivarman came to the throne.

The Volume V begins with the reign of Avantivarman. This was the period when Kashmir was internally consolidated. The preceding reigns had witnessed internal troubles; politically and economically Kashmir had suffered. Avantivarman's reign was remarkable for the execution of an engineering project to prevent floods and drain the valley. The scheme was executed by an engineer named Suyya,

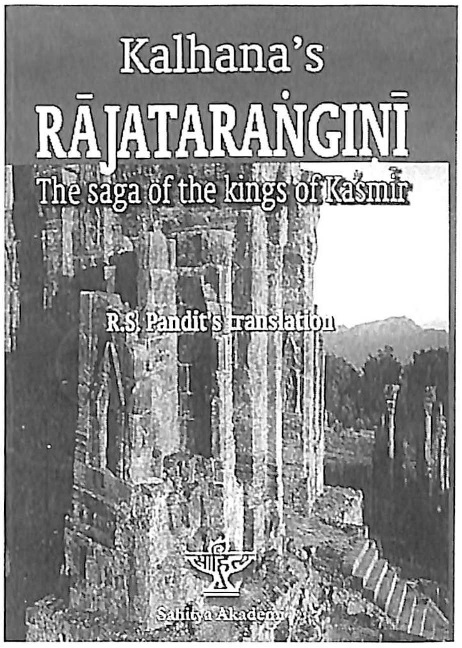

Folio of Rajatarangini manuscript (Devanagari script) Raghunath Temple Library
Courtesy: http://www.siraurelstein.org.uk/themotif1.html

after whom the present town of Sopore was named. He adopted a novel method of throwing money into the Vitasta near gorges and asked people to take the money out. People while searching for the money cleared the bedrocks and the flow of water become easy.

Avantivarman also founded Avantipura in which were laid the foundations of two temples of Avanteshvara and Avantisvami dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu respectively. After Avantivarman, his son Shankaravarman came to throne with little difficulty. Some trouble was created by the ministers of his cabinet.

Shankaravarman wanted to build an empire like that of the Karkotas. He built a strong army and conquered some lost territories of Kashmir. In his reign, forced labour system was introduced. It was used chiefly for transport purposes. Other important kings of this dynasty were Gopalavarman, Sugandha, Cakravarman and Unmathavanti. According to Kalhana, this was the time when Dombas were in power.

The Volume VI begins with the reign of Yashaskara (939-948 CE), a Brahmin. He was the choice of the assembly of Brahmins, which assembled after Kashmir had virtually witnessed civil war. Kalhana praises Yashaskara for good administration. After him Parvagupta (949-950 CE), Kshemagupta (950-958 CE), Abhimanyu (958-972 CE) and other kings ruled for short periods respectively Kshemagupta's union with Didda brought Kashmir under the rule of Lohara family. She ascended the throne in 981CE and ruled up to 1003 CE. She elevated Tunga to the post of Prime Minister and along with him crushed all rebellions, including those Brahmins who resorted to fasting. Though she acted like a cunning diplomat, the political stability in Kashmir was maintained during her rule. Kalhana records a very interesting story about the selection of Sangramaraja, her own nephew, as her heir apparent.



The Volume VII begins with the reign of Samgramaraja (1003-1028 CE), during whose reign Mahmud Ghaznavi attacked Kashmir twice. But both the times he was pushed back. Samgramaraja was succeeded by Hariraja who ruled just for 22 days. After his death, his son Ananta came to throne. Ananta (1028-1063 CE) was under the influence of the two princes of the Shahi dynasty and their sister, who was his queen. After Ananta his son Kalasa (1063-1089 CE) came to throne. His reign was characterised by peace and prosperity and his policy enabled him to assert his authority over the neighboring principalities.

Kalasa's son Harsha ascended the throne in 1089 CE. Harsha was a remarkable person in many ways. He was a great poet and loved the art of dance, theatre and music. Learned chronicler Kalhana's father, Champaka was a minister under Harsha who commenced his rule well. But soon he changed his rule into one of tyranny and loot by destroying temples. He seized the gold and silver images of Gods and melted them for the sake of material wealth. Kalhana calls him Turuska (Muhammadan) for this act.

The Volume VIII is the last chapter of the Rajatarangini. Here we see Uccala the eldest among the rebel brothers ascending the throne with the help of the Damaras. But his reign witnessed constant trouble from the Damaras and from his brother Sussala. Uccala (1101-11 CE) was popular among lower class people because he punished dishonest bureaucrats. Uccala and Sussala came to terms with the birth of Jayasimha (1105-06 CE).

In the following years Sussala, Radra Shankharaja and Salhana ruled Kashmir. They were nothing but puppets in the hands of the Damaras. People were tired of Salhana, so Sussala who was out of Kashmir was invited back. There was a brief struggle after

Shankaravarman wanted to build an empire like that of the Karkotas. So, he built a strong army and conquered some lost territories of Kashmir

The Volume VII of the Rajatarangini is mostly devoted to Jayasimha's rule. Kalhana is all praise for Jayasimha who wanted to restore peace and prosperity to the people of Kashmir

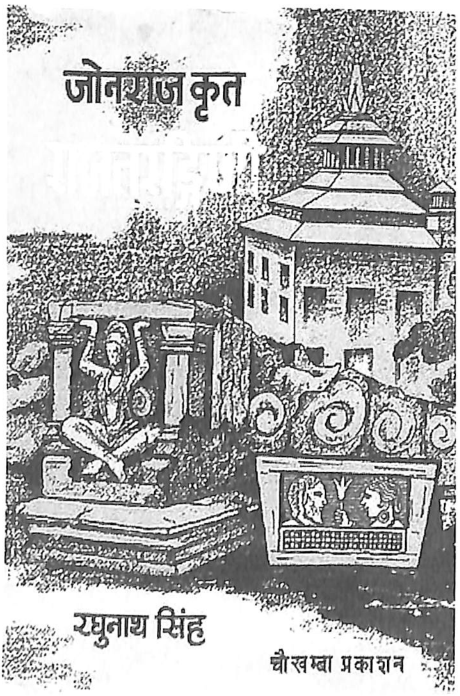
which Sussala came to the throne in 1112 CE. Sussala was in many respects like his brother. He was also attacked by the Damaras. He made alliances with the neighbouring kings. Sussala also led military expedition to Rajouri and other places.

When Sussala's wife Meghamanjari died in dejected state he abdicated the throne in favour of Jayasimha, his eldest son. Sussala was killed by Utpala, the agent of one Damara Tikka. The death of his father Sussala came as a shock to Jayasimha. The state treasury was empty and the Damaras were posing a constant threat. But luck favoured him. Pancacandra, son of Gargacandra, the powerful Damara helped him in this critical period.

The first few years of Jayasimha's reign were troublesome, but next few years of his rule were peaceful. During this period the king restored many temples and Mathas. Kalhana was an eye witness to Jayasimha's reign and gives a detailed description of his reign. The Volume VII of the Rajatarangini is mostly devoted to Jayasimha's rule. Kalhana is all praise for Jayasimha who wanted to restore peace and prosperity in Kashmir.

We find the term Damara in the Rajatarangini, especially during the rule of Lohara dynasty. Kalhana, while describing king Lalitaditya's injection on state policy deliberately mentions first the hill people and then speaks of not allowing the villagers to have more food than required for one year, otherwise they would become Damaras. On this statement of Lalitaditya, Wilson concludes that they are hill people living in the north of Kashmir and they do not belong to any particular tribe. There is another term Lavanya which is mentioned in the Rajatarangini as a separate group of people connected with the harvest of agriculture. According to Stein some Damaras were recruited from the Lavanya tribe. We have in Kashmir Lones (Lavanya) and Dars (Damaras), but the other small groups mentioned in the Rajatarangini such as Ekangas are not known in Kashmir.

It is not known which cast Damaras belonged to, but we are certain that they were not Brahmins because owing to the oppression of Damaras, Brahmins resorted to hunger strike and immolating themselves. In the eighth Book of Rajatarangini they are mentioned as Dombas. Sometimes Kalhana even separates them from Kashmiris and mentions them as a tribe (Damara Kula). But one thing is certain that these Damaras were, if not kings, but sometimes, kingmakers and a headache to the administration. With the passage of time the term Damara came to have a sort of bad connotation and anyone doing some notorious act like grabbing someone's land, stealing of food-grains would be called a Damara in contempt.



Kalhana as a historian seems to suffer from a certain amount of prejudice. It is to be concluded that he was inspired by a spirit of native patriotism and therefore he was not prepared to recognise the importance of a person who was a non-Kashmiri. Obviously, Kalhana does not make any mention of such a Shaiva thinker as Abhinavagupta, though he mentions the name of Kashmiri Shaiva scholar Bhatta Kalatta. Again, Kalhana does not mention the convening of the fourth Buddhist Council at the Kundalvana Vihara in Kashmir under Kanishka. It was a momentous event in the history and culture of Asia. But here again Kanishka, being a non-Kashmiri was not found worthy of mention by Kalhana, though he must have had definite information about these two events and he seems deliberately to have omitted them.

Kalhana does not mention Adi Shankaracharya as a force to reckon with in India. In the political field, he does not mention Alexander's invasion and his war with Porus. He does not say anything with regard to Chandragupta Maurya, Samudraguta, Pulakesin or Nagabhata. He does not mention anything about the important dynasties ruling different parts of India such as Lichchavis and the Vakatakes. Kalhana is also silent about the bordering provinces and their struggle with the people of Greece among others. It is possible that he had no source for above events, so he could not write anything on this account.

Kalhana has not dealt with political history only, but also depicted the social, economic and religious conditions of contemporary Kashmir. Trade, dress and textiles which were famous in different countries, are also described in detail. Administrative systems and the role of Kayasthas and different groups in the valley also find a place in the Rajatarangini. He makes mention of agriculture, fruits, especially grapes and saffron which, as he says, were found only in Kashmir. His topography is correct and some names are still prevalent. The role and position of women in Kashmir has also been touched upon.

Even if Kalhana's Rajatarngini suffers from some lapses, we should not ignore his marvellous attempt as Will Durant rightly calls the "only Hindu writer who seems to have grasped the function of the historian". ■

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Historians after Kalhana

History writing was a tradition in Kashmir which goes back to more than 2500 years It can be compared only with the Chinese and Greek historians.

Kalhana's work was continued by his countryman Jonaraja who brought the Chronicle down to the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. Jonaraja was a scholar of considerable attainments and seems to have been well-acquainted with the old nomenclature of the Valley.

The greater portion of his Chronicle deals with the reigns of the late Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Kota. His pupil Srivara took up the thread and in four chapters wrote about the events from 1459 to 1486 AD. Srivara is a slavish imitator of Kalhana. His text looks in a great portion more like a canto from the Rajatarangini, than an original composition. The value of his work, however, lies in giving the details of his contemporary life. His Chronicle shows the slow change in the names of localities from old to modern. For example we have the name of Mahasarit stream transformed into Mari, an evident adaptation of the modern Mar, and the tirtha of Martand regularly referred to by its modern name Bavan.

The fourth Chronicle entitled Rajavalipataka, begun by Prajyabhatta, whose composition ended with the year 1513-14 AD, was completed by his pupil Suka some years after the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar. The slow change from the old to modern treatment of place names and other details are more pronounced in the works of Prajyabhatta and Suka.

Notwithstanding the inferiority of these later Chronicles as literary composition when compared with Kalhana's work.

"It seems that the later authors had greatly improved Kalhana's method of writing history. They are clear and perspicuous, and events are narrated consecutively, so that the whole narration runs in one continuous flow. The writers could not, however, forget that they were poets as well as historians, and consequently they interspersed their accounts with flowers of poesy and rhetorical flourishes".

They are of immense value as being the sole and authentic record of the transitional period when Kashmir passed from the rule of Hindu to that of Muslim kings. They throw light on contemporary life of Kashmiris and record the troubles and oppression which lasted with short interruptions for two and a half centuries previous to Akbar's conquest.

-Extract from *A History of Kashmir* by PNK Bamzai

Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul

Buddhist Heritage of Kashmir

> The Buddhist scholars of Kashmir studied and taught not only in the valley but also disseminated and expounded the Buddhist faith and Buddhist teachings in neighbouring countries of Central Asia, China and Tibet

Kashmir has remained a great centre of Buddhist learning for several centuries. The Buddhist scholars of Kashmir made the faith more popular among the masses by giving new shape to the decaying order. They also spread the teachings of the Buddha in neighbouring regions of Central Asia, China and Java, where from it was introduced further in Korea and Japan. In Tibet, Buddhism reached at a later stage. Kashmir has made a major contribution in the development of Buddhism in Tibet also.

The origin of Buddhism in Kashmir is shrouded in obscurity. Buddhist sources, however, are unanimous in attributing the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir to Majjhantika, a monk of Varanasi and a disciple of Ananda. According to Ceylonese Chronicle, the *Mahavamsha*, Moggaliputta Tissa, the spiritual guide of King Ashoka, after the conclusion of the third Buddhist Council, sent missionaries to different countries to propagate Buddhism. The Buddhist savant Majjhantika was deputed to Kashmir-Gandhara.

The story of the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir by Majjhantika is also told in several other Buddhist texts like the Ashokavadana, the Avadanakalpalata, the travel account left by Xuan Xang and the Tibetan Dul-va (Vinaya). The story is abound with legendary colouring and relates how Majjhantika received hostile treatment at the hands of the local Naga people and their chief, and how he was finally able to win over to Buddhist faith the entire Naga population along with the king through his supernatural powers.

According to the Buddhist text the *Divyavadana*, however, several monks from Tamasavana in Kashmir were invited by Ashoka to attend the third Buddhist Council which was held at Pataliputra. Again, Kalhana describes the establishment of several *viharas* in Kashmir during the reign of King Surendra, the predecessor of Ashoka. This leads us to presume that the Buddhist faith was already introduced in Kashmir before the time of Majjhantika and Ashoka. However, it also seems possible that Buddhism, though introduced earlier, gained a firm footing in Kashmir only under the spiritual leadership of Majjhantika during the third century BCE.

Ashoka (circa.273-236 BCE), whose sway extended to Kashmir as well, is described by Kalhana as a king of Kashmir and the follower of Jina i.e. Buddha and is credited by him with the establishment of several *stupas* and *viharas* in the valley. Thus he is credited with the building of a *chaitya* of amazing height in the town of Vitastatra. Xuan Xang also noticed four stupas in the valley containing a portion

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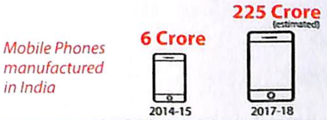

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- गाँव अपनाकर विकासात्मक कार्य करना।
- आई टी आई अपनाकर कौशल विकास करना।
- 'स्वच्छ भारत' एवं 'स्वच्छ विद्यालय' के अंतर्गत सरकारी स्कूलों में शौचालय के रखरखाव के लिए निधि उपलब्ध कराना।

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Tappar Buddhist site, Kashmir (from IGNCA Collection)

of relics of the Buddha which, according to him were set up by Ashoka. The well known Tibetan historian Taranatha speaks of King Ashoka as having bestowed lavish gifts on several Buddhist *sanghas* in Kashmir.

The history of Buddhism in Kashmir after Ashoka is somewhat obscure. Buddhism seems to have fallen on evil days during the reign of Jalauka, the son of Ashoka. Jalauka was a supporter of the indigenous Naga and Shaiva cults and not well disposed towards the Buddhist faith. However, a change in him was effected later towards Buddhist faith by the intercession of the divine sorceress named Kritya at whose request he built a *vihara* called Krityashrama. This *vihara* has been identified as 'Ki- teche' by O'kong the Chinese traveller who visited it during the 8th century CE. Further the site has been identified with the place known as Kitsahom situated five miles below the Baramulla district of Kashmir.

The next landmark in the history of Buddhism in Kashmir is formed by the famous Buddhist treatise Millindapanha which records the discussion on important Buddhist topics between the Indo-Greek King Menander or Milinda and the *Arhat* named Nagasena. The scene of the discussion is said was a spot only twelve *yojanas* from Kashmir. The author of this famous treatise refers to his intimate knowledge about Kashmir and surrounding regions and appears to be fairly familiar with the people of this region. King Milinda, according to this work, first became a lay devotee, then built the Milinda Vihara and after some time handed over the reign of his government to his son to join the Buddhist *sangha.*

The epigraphic and numismatic evidences attest to the professing of Buddhist faith by the Indo-Greek rulers, who, after the fall of Mauryan Empire, established their sway over whole of the north-western India. It is not unlikely that Kashmir also came under the influence of Indo-Greek rulers and Buddhism flourished in the valley under their benign patronage. A coin of Menander found in Kashmir is now in the SPS Museum in Srinagar.

Buddhism received a great fillip during the rule of the Kushana rulers. Kanishka's reign (c. 78 CE) is full of glory in the history of Buddhism. He recovered the lost glory of the religion and fulfilled the work of King Ashoka, of sending distinguished scholars abroad to propagate the faith. Kashmir and Gandhara particularly enjoyed the prosperity in the history of Buddhism during Kanishka's reign. The session of the fourth Buddhist Council, the creation of the famous commentaries in Sanskrit language, well known as Vibhasha Shastra and the appearance of distinguished scholars are some of the important factors for which Kashmir stood prominent during his reign.

With Kashmir becoming an important centre of Abhidharma studies i.e. the Sarvastivadin Abhidharma, a large number of distinguished scholars were produced from here who specialised in Abhidharma studies and wrote commentaries. Many scholars went outside India to propagate the faith. Some, who went to the neighbouring countries of Central Asia, China, and Tibet, etc., translated Sanskrit texts into the languages of those regions. Again, after becoming an important centre of Abhidharama studies, distinguished scholars from others countries were attracted to Kashmir to gain the firsthand knowledge.

According to Kalhana,

The discovery of Buddhist manuscripts from a stoopa at Gilgit is one of the most important landmarks in the history of Buddhism in Kashmir.

Huska, Jushka and Kanishka were the pious Turushka rulers who founded three towns (*puras*) viz. Hushkapura (Uskur), Jushkapura (Zukur) and Kanishkapura (Kanespur) respectively and erected *chaityas* and *mathas* at Shushkaletra and other places. Jushka is also reported having built a *vihara* in Jushkapura. According to Taranatha, Kanishka became a devout Buddhist and listened to the discourses delivered to him by Simha - a ruler of Kashmir, who, after ordination was called Sudarshana.

After Kanishka, another king who is known to have extended patronage to Buddhism in Kashmir was Meghavahana (c. 6th century CE). Meghavahana originally hailed from Gandhara - a predominantly Buddhist land. He prohibited the slaughter of living creatures in his country. His queen Amritaprabha of Pragjyotisha (modern Assam) built, for the use of foreign monks, a lofty *vihara* called Amritabhavana. To this *vihara* reference has been made by the Chinese traveller O'Kong also and it is represented by the extant ruins at Vounta Bhavana, a suburb of Srinagar situated three miles towards the north. Her father's spiritual preceptor, who was a native of Ladakh constructed a *stupa*, called Lo-stonpa.

Other queens are also referred to having built many *viharas*. Queen Yukadevi having built *viharas* of wonderful appearance at Nadavana is reported having accommodated in it both, the monks as also lay devotees. Queen Indradevi is said to have founded the Indradevi-bhavana with a quadrangle and a *stupa*. In the same way, Queen Khadana and Queen Samma also established *viharas* in their own names. In this context it seems that the place named Khadaniyar situated four miles below Varahmulla may have remained connected with Queen Khadana.

Kalhana further refers to some evidences which prove the establishment of Buddhism during the sixth and the seventh centuries CE. Jayendra the maternal uncle of King Pravarasena II patronised Buddhism and built Jayendra Vihara and erected a statue of Brhad Buddha in it. This *vihara* was subsequently destroyed by King Kshemagupta (950-958 CE).

The ministers of Yudhishthira II also patronised the faith and constructed *viharas, chaityas* and completed other pious works. Amritaprabha, wife of King Ranaditya installed the statue of Buddha in a *vihara* built by Meghavahana's wife Bhinna. Galuna, the minister of King Vikramaditya built one vihara in the name of his wife Ratnavali. The queen of the Karkota King Durlabhavardhana (600-636 CE) setup Anangabhavana Vihara and Prakasha Devi, wife of King Candrapida (686-695 CE) founded Prakashika Vihara.

A fairly trustworthy account of the state of Buddhism in Kashmir from the 7th century onwards is furnished by some literary documents, the travel accounts of the Chinese travellers Xuan Xang and O'Kong, the *Rajatarangini*, some archaeological discoveries and epigraphic records.

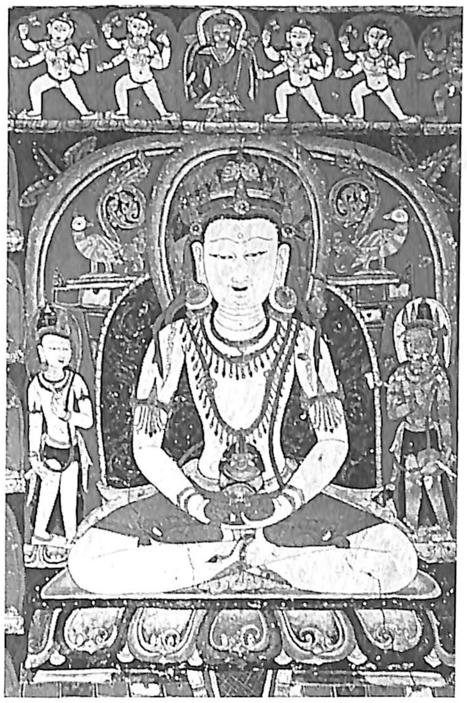
The Nilamata Purana of the 6th – 7th century CE is a local Sanskrit text dealing with the sacred places, rituals and ceremonies of Kashmir. The Buddha is referred as an incarnation of Vishnu in this text. It prescribes the celebration of Buddha's birthday as follows:

> *"In the bright fortnight the images of Buddhas should be bathed in water rendered holy with all herbs, jewels and scents, in accordance with the instructions of the Shakyas i.e. the Buddhists. The dwelling places of the Shakyas should be whitewashed and the walls of the chaitayas - the abodes of the God, should be decorated with paintings. Gifts of clothes, food and books should be made to the Buddhists and a festival swarming with dancers and actors should be celebrated. Worship of Buddha with eatable offerings, flowers, clothes etc., and the charities to the poor should continue for three days".*

The discovery of Buddhist manuscripts from a stupa at Gilgit is one of the most important landmarks in the history of Buddhism in Kashmir. On the basis of palaeography these manuscripts written in the so-called post Gupta alphabets may be assigned to the 7th century CE. Gilgit at that time was ruled by the Shahi princes as is indicated by some epigraphic records. The manuscripts in itself also contain a mention of some Shahi rulers. These Shahi rulers owed allegiance to the rulers of Kashmir. It appears that the flourishing state of Buddhism in the 7th century was not confined to the valley alone but the predominance of Buddhism could also be noticed in the distant north of Kashmir.

Xuan Xang visited Kashmir in 631 CE. He saw about a hundred *sangharamas* and five thousand Buddhist priests in the valley. He also saw four *stupas* built by Ashoka, each containing relics of the Buddha. Among the Buddhist *viharas* visited by him, he specially mentions the Jushka Vihara where he stayed for the night after his first entry into the valley at Baramulla. He also speaks about Jayendra Vihara founded by the maternal uncle of Pravarsena II. Here, he stayed for a couple of years and received instructions in various shastras.

Xuan Xang was warmly received by the king and was invited to his palace where he was provided all facilities including assistance of twenty scribes for copying important Buddhist texts. Xuan Xang's account proves beyond any doubt that Kashmir even during his visit was a centre of Buddhist learning and there were several distinguished Buddhist scholars in the valley having commanded mastery over the Vibhasha and the Upadesha shastras and also continued composing texts on important subjects with unabated and unflagging zeal and enthusiasm. Admiring the contents of these literary texts, Xuan Xang remarks that in these there was evidence of great study and research. In them could be found an extra-ordinary insight into the Buddhist lore of various kinds and also into the Brahmanical learning, Indian alphabets and Vedas and their *angas*.



Alchi, Lhakhang Soma, Ladakh (from IGNCA Collection)

O'Kong, known also as Dharmadhatu, reached Kashmir via Kabul and Kandahar in 759 CE. He stayed in Kashmir for four years and studied Sanskrit and Vinaya texts from the celebrated Buddhist teachers. In Mundi Vihara, he studied the Vinaya texts of the Mulasarvastivadins. He noticed more than three hundred *viharas* in the valley and a large number of *stupas* and images. Besides, the Moung-ti vihara, O' Kong mentions the following Buddhist monasteries in the valley: Ngo-mi-to-p'a-wan (Amitabhavana), Ngo-Namli (Ananga or Anandabhavana), Ki teche (Krityashrama Vihara), Nao-ye-le, Je -jo, Ye-li-t'e-le, and K'o-qeen.

The rulers of the Karkota dynasty of Kashmir, who ruled during the 8th century CE, though staunch followers of Shaiva and Vaishnava faiths, were favourably disposed towards the Buddhist faith as well. They founded Buddhist institutions and endowed them with lavish gifts. The celebrated Karkota ruler, Lalitaditya Muktapida (600 - 736 CE) founded one Raja Vihara with a large quadrangle and a large *chaitya* at Parihasapura (the modern Paraspur). He also built another *vihara* with a *stupa* at Huskapura near Baramulla.

A huge copper image of the Buddha built by him is said was as high as almost touching the sky. His minister Kayya built Kayya Vihara. Bhikshu Sarvajnamitra who had attained the purity of Buddha, lived in this *vihara*. Another minister of Lalitaditya named Cankuna, was a Tokharian. He built two *viharas*, one of which had a golden image of Buddha. Cankuna's son-in-law also built a *vihara*.

The next celebrated ruler of the Karkota dynasty, Jayapida Vinayaditya (751-782 CE) embellished his newly founded town Jayapura with three images of Buddha and a large *vihara*. The flourishing condition of Buddhism during the period of Karkotas is also evinced by archaeological excavations carried out at Parihasapura and other sites which have brought

The rulers of the Karkota dynasty who ruled during the 8th century CE, though staunch followers of Shaiva and Vaishnava faiths, were favourably disposed towards Buddhist faith as well

Parihaspura Buddhist site, Kashmir (from IGNCA Collection)

to light several *stupas*, *viharas*, *chaityas* and Buddhist images. Mention may be made of the excavated sites at Parihasapura founded by Lalitaditya which have revealed the existence of a *stupa*, a *vihara* and a *chaitya* and brought to surface two images of Boddhisattva and one of Buddha.

In the following centuries Buddhism in Kashmir was overshadowed by the wide upsurge of the Vaishnava and Shaiva faiths. However, in spite of the overwhelming predominance of Brahmanic faith and the loss of the royal patronage, Buddhism continued to flourish even as late as the 13th century CE or even later. This is supported by the Rajatarangini and the epigraphic evidences.

King Avantivarman (855/6 - 883 CE) revered Vishnu, Shiva and also Buddha. He prohibited the killing of living creatures. During his time the great scholars like Shivasvamin, poets Anadavardhana, Muktakana and Ratnakara lived. Although a Shaiva by faith, Shivasvamin composed a poetic work with Buddhist theme entitled Kapphinabhyudaya. The poet Anandavardhana is also reported to have written a sub-commentary (*vivritti*) on the Pramana-viniscaya-tika of Dharmottara, a text on Buddhist logic.

The Avadanakalpalata was composed by the very well-known poet of Kashmir Kshemendra during the 11th Century CE. It was completed by his son Somendra who added one more chapter to his father's work, to make the total number of Avadanas 108, an auspicious number. He also wrote an introduction to it. The Avadanakalpalata is a huge collection of avadanas which are called Jatakas in early Buddhist tradition. Kshemendra has drawn up the traditional avadanas but in a poetical form.

Kshemendra has many works to his credit some of which are known by name only. He composed his works during the reign of King Ananta (1020-1063 CE) and his son Kalasha (1063-1089 CE) as is evident from his works available to us. Kshemendra had a variety of interests and has written on different subjects. Having been influenced by Buddhism he seems to have studied the Buddhist scriptures and observed Buddhist practices deeply. This must have made it possible for him to compose the avadanas successfully. Further, being impressed by the faith he also included the Buddha among the ten incarnations of Vishnu in his Dashavataracharita.

In the beginning Avadanakalpalata had a mixed reception in Tibet on the grounds that it was written by a layman and not by a monk. Because of their imperfect acquaintance with the sutras and agamas, some lamas of Tibet even charged that the work contained matters which differed from the real Jatakas of the Buddha. But in due course of time the Tibetan scholars realised the merits of this work and started appreciating it.

A large number of Tibetan translators as well as scholars devoted their attention to the study of this work containing the largest number of avadanas than any other work of this class. Each avadana has a distinct story of an incident in the life of the Buddha illustrating a specific moral. The Buddhist propensity of self-sacrifice is brought to a

The flourishing condition of Buddhism during the period of Karkotas is also evinced by archaeological excavations carried out at Parihasapura and other sites

The benign patronage of the pious rulers with Buddhist leanings gave it a fillip and many monasteries with rich endowments were constructed throughout

climax here. In the last chapter the author has illustrated very well the six perfections (*paramitas*), viz., charity, moral character, patience, diligence, contemplation and wisdom, of the Boddhisattva. Describing the merits of Avadanakalpalata, Somendra says:

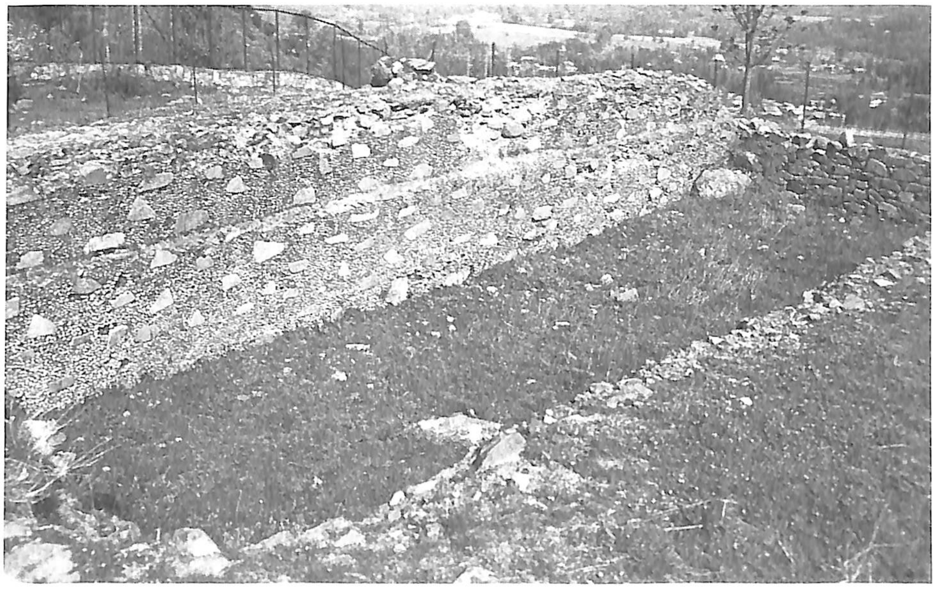
> *"Those well-known viharas, gorgeous with the array of paintings, pleasing to the eyes, have passed away in the cause of time. But the vihara of moral merits, excellent and delightful, erected by my father, in which the avadanas, with weighty meanings underlying them, are carved out, as it were, and painted in variegated colours by the pencil of the goddess of learning, will not perish even at the end of time not even by the ravages of fire or of water".*

That Buddhism was still popular in the valley and had following in the 10th century is also indicated by the inscription of Queen Didha, preserved in SPS Museum, Srinagar. The inscription is incised on three sides of a pedestal of bronze statue of the Bodhisattva Padmapani. The epigraph records consecration of a religious gift (*daya-dharma*) consisting of the statute itself by Rajanaka Bimata, a Buddhist devotee. Another inscription, of probably the same or somewhat later period and incised on the back of a Buddhist image, contains the famous Buddhist creed Ye *Dharma*, etc.

There is another inscription, discovered from Arigom, fifteen miles south-west of Srinagar belonging to 1197 CE, which records the construction of a brick shrine by certain Ramadeva for installing an image of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. This *vihara* was originally in wood and was burnt down during the reign of Simha? Similarly, in the reign of Rajadeva (1213-1235 CE) a particular cult object, called Mandalaka, was consecrated by the Buddhist teacher Kamalashri in honour of Bodhisattva Lokeshvara (Avalokiteshvara). To the same or somewhat earlier period probably belong the two inscriptions discovered by Cunningham at Drass in Ladakh which record mention of the Bodhisattva Maitreya and Lokeshvara.

On the basis of the *Rajatarangini* it seems that Buddhism somehow continued to receive patronage under the second Lohara dynasty (1101 - 1339 CE). King Uccala's queen Jayamati built a vihara and the king himself laid the foundation of a *vihara* in honour of his sister Sulla. Then, we find Jayasimha, another king of this dynasty, whose rule commenced in 1128 CE. His favourable attitude towards Buddhism led him to completing the construction of Sulla Viharas which was started by Jayasimha's uncle Uccala.

The relatives and officers of Jayasimha also gave expression to their Buddhist leanings and founded a number of Buddhist institutions to which large endowments were granted by Jayasimha. His queen Ratnadevi's *vihara* attained importance among the religious monuments. Rilhana, his minister who was a pious man, built a *vihara* at Bhalerakaprapa in honour of his deceased wife Sussala. Jayasimha adorned Bhuttapura founded by him with *viharas* and *mathas* and completed the Bijja Vihara. His commander-in-chief's wife Cinta built a *vihara* on the bank of Vitasta, along with other five



Harwan Buddhist site, Kashmir (from IGNCA Collection) buildings.

Despite the prosperous career of the Buddhist faith in Kashmir there are only a few monuments left in the valley. Whatever is extant are only the plinths and lower portions of the superstructure. Their architectural peculiarities exhibit a distinct resemblance to the architecture of Buddhist Gandhara. The figures of Buddha and other related personages from Ushkura (thirty-one miles to the north-west of Srinagar), Harwan (seven miles to the north-east of Srinagar), and Akhnoor (nineteen miles north-west of Jammu town) seem to have been executed in the same art-tradition as the latest reliefs on the walls of late edifices of Taxila (now in Pakistan) and other analogue sites.

In the history of Buddhism, Kashmir has a pride of place. Even since its introduction, Buddhism continued to flourish and enjoy popularity in the valley. The benign patronage of the pious rulers with Buddhist leanings gave it a fillip and a large number of monasteries with rich endowments were constructed throughout. These *viharas*, in course of time, became great centres of Buddhist study and research and a large number of original Buddhist texts and expository commentaries were composed by the distinguished Buddhist scholars.

These flourishing centres of Buddhism not only attracted the attention of the scholars in the country but several Buddhist celebrities of other countries flocked to the valley to gain first-hand knowledge. The Buddhist scholars of Kashmir studied and taught not only in the valley but also disseminated and expounded the Buddhist faith and Buddhist teachings in neighbouring countries of Central Asia, China and Tibet wherefrom it expanded further.

The details of the activities of Kashmiri Buddhist monks and scholars in the countries outside India come to us from the accounts coming from those countries which make it all the more very important evidences. In India we are left with no such evidences. For a detailed discussion on the contributions made by Kashmiri scholars towards the dissemination of Buddhist culture in these countries reference may be made to *Buddhist Savants of Kashmir - Their Contributions Abroad.*■

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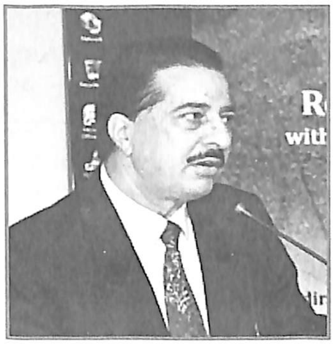


Dr. Bansi Lal Malla

Vaishnavism in Kashmir

Kashmir has been a seat of learning and erudition from its hoary past. Its beauty and verdure, snow-capped peaks, sheen of sparkling waters, rustling leaves of dense forests, lakes and springs have charmed poets and creative minds to sing its praises calling it a 'paradise on earth'. Inspired and motivated by the pristine beauty of landscape, the myriad minded genius of Kashmir has immense contributions to make to all segments of human knowledge and creative ventures. Poetics, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, religion and music are some such domains as are vitally enriched by the Kashmir's share of contributions. Kashmir has recognisably carved a niche for itself in the total fabric of culture available in the Indian sub-continent and any attempt aimed at diminution of its role-profile as such does not deserve notice. The Kashmiri style, all through the ages, right from its seminal stages to the present state of civilisation has been that of tolerance, mutual good-will and humanism resulting in forging and strengthening of social bonds primarily responsible for shaping of a cultural ethos, which, in turn, affects the life of people living in close touch with it.

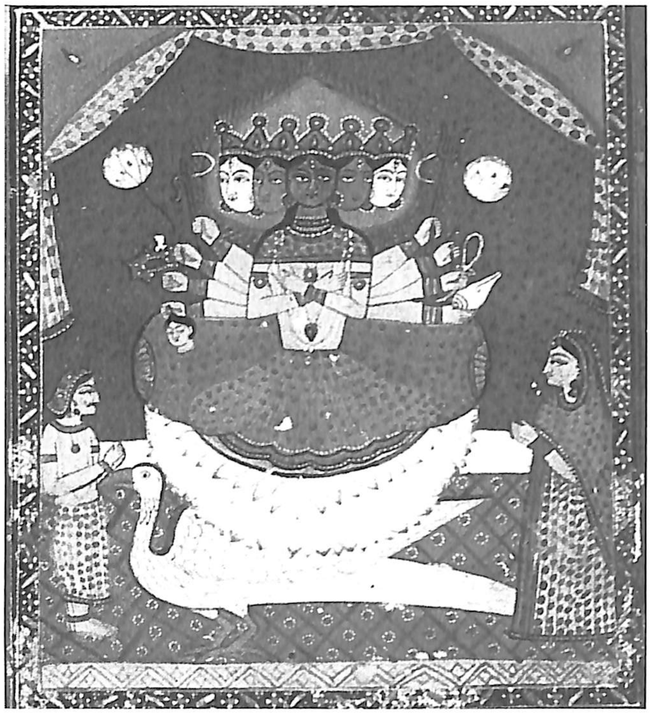
Kashmir was deeply impressed by Pancharatra school of Vaishnavism. It made a deep impact on the minds of the people to the extent that it shaped their religious behaviour

Historical Perspective

Kashmir is known as Sharadapitha from its ancient past. It is interesting to point out that Sharada is one of the consorts of Vishnu and the nomenclature of Kashmir as Sharadapitha owes its origin to predominance of Vaishnavite faith. It is difficult to establish the precise time period when Vaishnavism got introduced into Kashmir and evolutionary process it must have undergone. There are scholars who hold that Vaishnavism as a religious creed and cult was quite popular in Kashmir in the 6th century A.D. The epigraphical evidences also establish the flourishing state of Vaishnavism in the valley. A stone-slab was discovered from a private house in Srinagar containing references to the brahmanical images like Gauri, Kartikeya, Ganapati, Aditya and Krishna. The slab carries the date of 68 of the Laukika era. Another such inscription discovered from Pratapapur (modern day Tapar), a place situated at a distance of 47 km to the south-west of Srinagar, records the consecration of something not distinct (perhaps refers to the temple), mentioning a devotee of Vishnu. Sten Konow found an inscription, 'I worship Janardana' engraved on the base of a huge Vishnu image. This inscription had been reported from Bijbehara.

Kashmir, as per the Nilamata text was inhabited by Nagas and Pishachas. The Nagas had their own cult, which was so pervasive as to leave its traces on the Vaishnava cult of worship. The Vaishnava thought-current was in no way abhorrent to the acceptance and absorption of influences from Nagas. In fact, the history of Vaishnavism in Kashmir is that of absorption and assimilation of all influences from the soil of Kashmir. The Naga is taken as asana of Vishnu and Sheshasayi Vishnu as conceived in Kashmir had its local traces mixed up with outside influences. As per Nilamata Purana (v. 69), it was Vishnu who anointed the Naga king Nila, as the chief of the Naga cult in Kashmir. It also says that in India the cults of Nagas, Vishnu, Shiva and Buddha flourished and thrived side by side and each cult without obstruction and abhorrence received inspiration from the other in a pure spirit of give and take. Each cult is respectful of the Gods and divinities of the other cult.

The antiquity of the tradition of Vishnu worship in Kashmir is further established by the names of some mountains, lakes and places in and around Kashmir indicating Vaishnava connections. Lakes bearing names like Vishusar and Krishnasar are visibly connected with Vishnu. The name of the place Anantnag is directly connected with Ananta, the abode of Vishnu. Also Balarama the elder brother of Krishna is the personification of snake and he is Ananta incarnated in human form. The words like Chakreshvara, Vishnupada, Ramardhan and Chakrahar (modern day Chakdar) are undoubtedly carrying Vaishnava imprint in them.



Goddess Sharda enthroned, folio from a MS. of prayer texts in Sharda script, National Museum, New Delhi

There are numerous textual allusions to indicate that many kings and queens of Kashmir were the disciples of the Vaishnava creed. These kings and queens were responsible for propagating and patronising the sect to a large extent. Kalhana (1148-50 A.D.) refers to queen Ranarambha, who had persuaded her husband Randitya to convert a Shaiva temple into a Vaishnavite shrine, Jayant Bhat in his Agamadharma refers to Ranasvamin temple of Vishnu. During the domain of Karkotas both kings and nobles in the corridors of power patronized the erection of Vishnu temples. Kings like Duralabhavardhana, Chandrapida, Lalitaditya, Jayapida and Queens Kamalavati and Amritaprabha are known to have patronised the construction of Vishnu temples. The Rajatarangini unequivocally informs about the construction of two Vaishnavite temples during the regime of the king Lalitaditya. At Buniyar a temple dedicated to Vishnu is still standing perceptibly bearing all the characteristics of Vaishnavite temples. The temple can be dated to 8th century A.D.

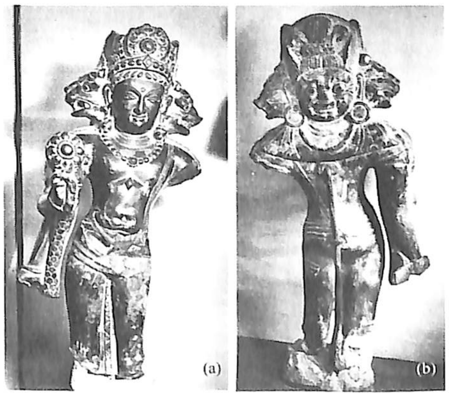
The popularity of Vaishnavism touched its new pinnacle of glory in the times of Utpala dynasty (855-1003 A.D). Avantivarman , a scion of the dynasty, was a devout disciple of Vishnu and is credited with erecting a temple of Vishnu called Avantisvamin. His minister, Suyya, founded a Vishnu temple called Hrsikesha Yogasayin. The period ranging between 8th and 9th centuries witnessed the production of a number of sculptures carrying Vaishnava motifs and themes. Bijbehara, Amarkot, Devasar, Avantipur, and Varanag are some such sites as have yielded a number of sculptures imprinted with Vaishnava subjects. Queen Sugandha and her daughter-in-law were for all-out support for the propagation of the Vaishnava creed and cult. They were responsible for the building of Gopalakeshva and Nandikeshva temples respectively Meruvardhanasvami, the minister of king Partha, Yasakara, Parvagupta, Bhatta Phalguna and a Shahi king Bhima and queen Didda are known to have played their role in the domain of Vishnu temple construction. Vaishnavism as per the

Rajatarangini received a setback at the hands of king of Harsha, whom Kalhana calls `deranged` and `Turuska`, but, his successor, Uccala, tried to rejuvenate the creed. The glory of Vaishnavism in Kashmir came to an end with the spread of Islam by a few kings, who were bigoted and over-zealous to boost up the new faith. Destruction of temple and images resulted in worship in seclusion.

In the traditional Hindu cosmology, the Gods are related to the earth by dwelling in the upper reaches of Mount Meru (Sumeru), the central peak and axis of the world. They live in one cosmos with making and descend to the foothills when needed. Corresponding to this, man developed temples which are symbols of the world-mountain or, analogically, of the Universal man (Purusha) whose body comprehends the universe, the names of the various limbs of the human body from the foot of the temple structure. But the Vastu Purusha is lifeless unless the soul resides in it. His real soul being the central image installed on its sanctum being the garbha graha or the house of the womb, built in the universe-form of womb. This experience is traditionally justified by a analogy between the dark cave of the heart and the dark space of the shrine where the image appears. Above it rises the high tower, a microcosm of mount Meru with its vertical thrust leading eye and heart to union with the divine. In some parts of India the temple courts and precincts were vastly expanded to constitute temple cities, replicas of the heavenly bodies that included all the activities of religion and daily life. All the temples were laid in accordance with the well-defined plan. Building a temple was a ritual in itself.

Vaishnava Thought

Kashmir has been a great centre of Buddhist and Brahmanical art and religion in ancient and medieval times. There are historical notices available to establish the view that Buddhism as a religion and faith in Kashmir enjoyed supremacy over other religious creeds and cults, which had already been formed or were in the process of formation. Buddhism being the one of the most tolerant religions of the world did not oppose or obstruct other religious thought-currents to shape the minds of people either at mass level or at intellectual plane. Kashmir is well known for being a Buddhist seat of learning since the time Ashoka introduced Buddhism in the region. He is credited with the establishment of Shrinagari (city of splendours and beauty), which was littered over with numerous Chaityas and Viharas. Though Buddhism was the dominant creed, Kashmir had a well-entrenched history of Shaivism, which can be traced back to its hoary past. The popular form of linga worship was practiced by the mass of people. It is, therefore, safe to aver that there was a process of interaction between Buddhism and Shaivism. A time came when the Shaivite creed blossomed forth through a new philosophy, which was shaped by brilliant minds not satisfied with the Buddhist exposition of God, world and man. They presented a new perspective to combat the Buddhist logic and credo. The tussle at the level of intellect led to the birth of the philosophy of Monism, which presented new vistas for tackling philosophical issues from a novel standpoint. Meanwhile, new developments were taking place in the field of religion and art in the Indian sub-continent. The Vaishnava cult and credo was emerging with new perspective leaving its deep imprint on the inquisitive minds. This religious thought-current also found its way into Kashmir, which possessed rare intellectual and imaginative genius to assimilate the spirit of the new religious mode of thinking. Kashmir did not only receive various religious, intellectual and art impulses, but also gave them a new shape with a view to transforming them to suit its own religious, intellectual and aesthetic needs and aspirations. There has been an active exchange of ideas going on between Kashmir and rest of the Indian subcontinent. Mountain ramparts never proved a barrier to the flow of religious, intellectual and aesthetic thought-currents and trends into Kashmir, leaving their imprint on the local genuine only to generate a new ferment resulting



(a) Vaikuntha Vishnu, Avantipur (Pulwama), Mid 9th cent. A.D., Stone, S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar (b) Kapila face (back view)

in the enrichment of the cultural mosaic deeply entrenched in the life of the Kashmiris as a whole.

Ramanuja, the founder of qualified Monism, is said to have visited Kashmir Valley to propagate his brand of Vaishnavism along with its philosophical propositions with a view to combating Shaivism, which as a philosophy had left its impact on South India only to generate a new Shaivite movement there. He, when in Kashmir, must have certainly proved a source of strength to the followers of the creed. Though Ramanuja's visit to Kashmir is dated somewhere in the 11th century A.D., it is a proof enough to determine the role-profile that Kashmir over the years has come to acquire in regard to the Vaishavite cult and creed in general. Not only was the mass mind deeply impressed by the Vaishnava religious patterns of worship, but it also provided a new impulse to the Kashmiri genius to make new additions to the philosophical doctrines of the creed and weave a new web of mythology in tune with Vaishnavite Gods and Goddesses The Nilamata Purana, which is dominantly a Vaishnavite text, gives an elaborate account of Vaishnava impact on the life of the Kashmiris, who shaped their ethical pattern of life and aesthetic expression in onsonance with Vaishnava tenets. The valley was a seat of Vishnu in the form of Chakrin, says the Vishnudharmottara Purana. The Nilamata text is replete with eulogies in praise of Vishnu, who, according to it, is lauded and honoured by Brahma and Shiva too.

Pancharatra School

Vaishnavism in Kashmir with its protracted history is said to reflect a synthesis of various Vaishnava cults. The religious aspect of it included the concept of the Vedic Vishnu, Vishnu in Pancharatra school, the religion of Satvatas and finally the religion of Krishna and Rama. The cult of Bhagavatas came to accept Vasudeva-Narayana as its supreme deity, while the Pancharatra followers worshipped four Vyuhas, namely Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. This development in the region subsequently led to the introduction of a sizable number of Vaikuntha images in Kashmir. In fact, Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha were heroes belonging to Vrishni race, which, later on, got defied and incorporated in the cosmological speculation of the Sankhya system, being a dominant system of that period. Vishnu as per the text of Nilamata Purana bears four arms, four faces and has lotus eyes; his overall complexion is that of a blue lotus or white snow. He is described as wearing white or yellow clothes, a crown studded with jewels and ear-rings. Coming to the attributes, the Nilamata Purana makes a mention of conch, discus, club, lotus and bow. His weapons in human form always wait him upon and Garuda is described as his mount.

As is well known, Kashmir was deeply impressed by the Pancharatra school of Vaishnavism. It made a deep impact on the minds of the people to the extent that it shaped their religious behaviour and also invested them with new horizons of philosophical thinking. Kashmir has been regarded as a cradle of early Pancharatra literature dealing mainly with Vishnu and his Vyuhas. J.C. Chatterji had noted that some Vaishnava works had very strong influence upon the general public of Kashmir which is proved by the fact that a great Shaiva philosopher Abhinavagupta had to present the tenets of Shaiva philosophy in the garb of a Vaishnavite treatise, Paramartha Sara. Pancharatra School in general has laid emphasis on Jnana, Yoga, Kriya and Charya. Jnana comprises philosophical doctrines in respect of God, nature and individual soul, the process of creation, and the modes of liberation. Yoga purports to meditation and concentration with a view to adhere to in the making of idols and in the construction of temples. Charya deals with the rules of conduct regarding rites, worship festivals and social obligations. The major works of Pancharatra contain an admixture of philosophy in the Narayaniya is free from abstruse and mysterious tangles; it has assumed a vast dimension in the Pancharatra Samhitas. The ritualistic elements as dilated upon in the Narayaniya are brahmanical in form and

The Nilamata text is replete with eulogies in praise of Vishnu, who, according to it, is lauded and honoured by Brahma and Shiva too

In the 9th century, the Pancharatra cult appears to have gained considerable popularity, although we find its mention as early as 5th century A.D. in the Jayakhya Samhita

content. But the thought pattern that seems to emerge out of it is a medley of Upanishadic monism, Sankhya dualist tendency; yogic mysticism stressing the worship school in Samhitas has been that of Sadhana as a means to lead a devotee onto the path of ascension. It is none of the concerns of this school in Samhitas to weave a web of definite philosophy involving metaphysical speculation.

Most of the world religions have found expression in some way in visual imagery. In the empirical world it symbolizes what is ultimate, and lead human beings into a relationship with what is beyond. These include the thought – forms, symbolic sounds of the mantras, and the diagrammatic yantras. They are held to be more accurate than an image being abstract.

In the 9th century, the Pancharatra cult appears to have gained considerable popularity, although we find its mention as early as 5th century A.D. in the Jayakhya Samhita. The sculptural repertoire of Kashmir laid bare a number of Chaturanana Vaikuntha images of Vishnu in this period. The four-headed, four armed standing Vaikuntha in mild abhanga posture is generally shown flanked on either side by personified weapons (ayudhapurusas) Gadadevi and Chkarapurusha. The other two hands generally carry sankha and padma. The ayudhapurusas are shown standing in acute flexions so that they can look up to their lord. The other types of Vaikuntha images reported from Kashmir include six-handed in standing posture, four-handed seated on Garuda and four-handed sitting in lilasana. The standing Vaikuntha images, in general bear a powerful muscular torso. In comparison to the bust, the legs in the cases look a little heavier. The figures are shown with typical Kashmiri crown and with a long Vanamala. One of these is shown carved topped by a seven-hooded snake. In Vaikuntha images such a feature is very rarely shown. The condensation of muscles on the chest and abdomen areas are putting up of weight of the body on the right left were the characteristics of all the Vaikuntha images of this period. These features were exclusively found in Kashmir. Between the two legs of Vaikuntha there appears the bust of Mother Earth (Bhudevi) on a lotus as if she is emerging out of lotus. Another aspect in these sculptures is that the sculptors paid greater attention to the treatment of the main figure, but the accessory figures were mostly summarily treated. The images of Vaikuntha, seated on his vehicle Garuda, are also found in Kashmir.

Bhagavata Cult

The cult of Bhagavatas came to accept Vasudeva-Narayana as its supreme deity. The popularity of Vishnu cult in the Kashmir Valley is testified and well borne out by availability of such images, although Nilamata Purana is silent about it. Kashmir unearthed icons of two-handed and four-handed standing Vishnu; four-handed Garudarudha Vishnu, four-handed Vishnu seated in Yogasana; Anantshayi Vishnu and four-handed Vishnu killing two demons - Madhu and Kaitabha. Many Vishnu images wear a three-pronged crown and vanamala, a typical Kashmiri feature. A small dagger fitted to the right side of the waist is also the characteristics of Vishnu images in the Valley. Most of the sculptures of the late 8th and early 9th centuries bear round faces. Such a face differs from the faces of earlier images, which were ovoid in shape. The ovoid shape for the faces entered Kashmir from the centres of Gupta art via Gandhara. But round face must be taken as typical local feature.

Vishnu when represented in Sheshasayi Vishnu form rests on the serpent coils, sheltered by his hood of nine (or even a thousand) heads symbolising the endless revolutions of nature. When Vishnu sleeps, creation is withdrawn in the night of Brahma, but the serpent is a remainder of creation ready to begin again and he provides among the Vaishnavites an equivalent of the linga of Shiva which is an expression of cosmic creative power in its potential form, and the iconographic equivalent of the creative sound syllable Om.

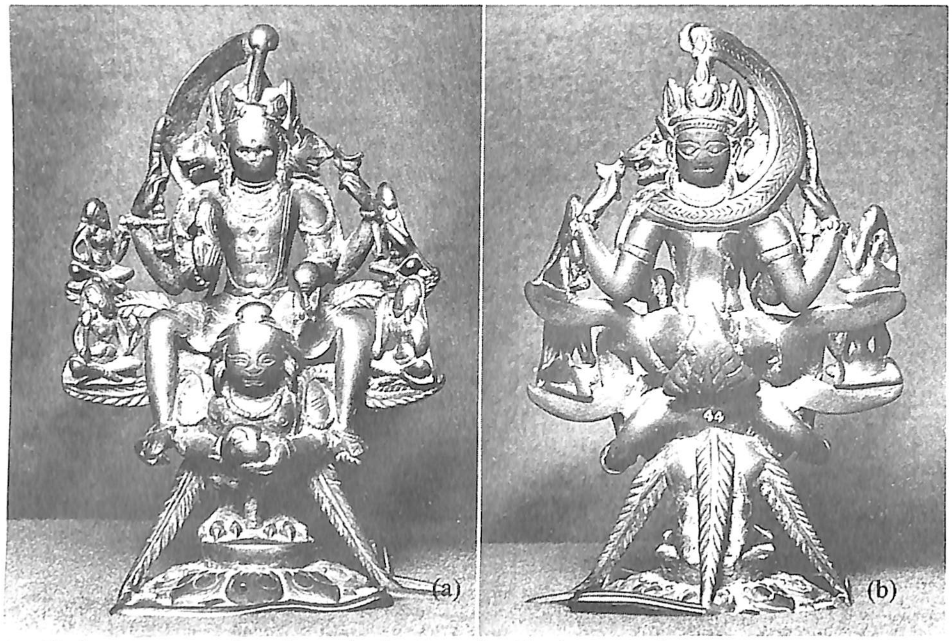
Incarnations of Vishnu

The concept of incarnation has been vital to the entire creed of Vaishnavism. Among various Vishnu incarnations – Varaha, Nrisinha, Hayagriva and Vamana – Trivikrama were quite popular in Kashmir. The Nilamata

Purana of Kashmir has also recorded different incarnations of Vishnu, but it does not present them in a systematic manner. It has made a mention of incarnations of Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Hansa, Ashvashirsas, Nrisinha, Trivikrama, Rama Dasharathi, Madhusudana, and Buddha. The Kalki and Parashurama incarnations are absent from the text. The same are found in Kshemendra's Dashavataracharita (10th-11th century A.D.). It is safe to conclude that the concept of incarnations might have been in the making when the Nilamata Purana was being written. But, it assumed a full-fledged shape and form when Kshemendra, the polymath of Kashmir, wrote his monumental work Dashavataracharita.

The Nilamata Purana has repeated the description of the legend of the Vamanavatara with the deviation that the Naga Mahapadma appears before Vishvagarbha with a view to acquiring land instead of Vishnu appearing before the king Bali. The same text has also recorded the tearing off of Hiranyakashypu to pieces by Nrisinha with his fierce claws. The reasons for slaying the demon are not dilated upon in the said text. The worship of Nrisinha was popular in Kashmir and that is established by some of the places that are dedicated to him and also by frequent references in the texts. The temple dedicated to Nrisinha and the installation of his idols at various sites stand recorded in the Rajatarangini of Kalhana Pandit.

There are some texts, which have ascribed the Varaha incarnation to Prajapati. Brahma as the divinity responsible for the upliftment of the earth is certainly testified by the Gardua Purana, Vishnu Purana and Linga Purana. Vishnu assuming the form of a boar was solely motivated to uplift the earth. But in Agni Purana, Brahmanda Purana and Matsya Purana, Vishnu is assuming the said form with a view to slaying Hiranyaksa a demon. The Nilamata Purana has a different version to offer. It refers to Vishnu assuming the boar form to uplift the earth with his tusk tearing the mountain into pieces. There is a frequent reference to Varaha Tirtha, the pilgrimage to which is described as giving equal merit as that of performing a horse-sacrifice (Rajasuya Yajna).



(a) Vaikuntha seated on his vehicle Garuda, Kashmir, 10th cent. A.D., Bronze, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (Formerly Prince of Wales Museum) (b) Back view

The worship of Varaha incarnation must have been quite popular in Kashmir is testified by a reference available in the Rajatarangini to the installation of a lofty and gorgeous image of Varaha. The illustrious king of Kashmir, Lalitaditya (724-761 A.D.), as per the version of the Rajatarangini, is said to have built a temple of Maha-Varaha at Parihasapura (modern day Paraspor). The popularity and prevalence of Varaha worship in Kashmir is further replenished by some of the place-names directly connected with Varaha (boar). Varahamula (modern Baramula) is associated with Varaha only.

Hayagriva incarnation was on the mind-plate of the Kashmiris is unambiguously testified by the Nilamata Purana. Vishnu had to assume Hayagriva form with the objective of rescuing the Vedas which were stolen by the demons Madhu and Kaitabha.

Composite/Syncretic Image

In Kashmir we find Laksmi-Narayana images in seated, standing as well as flying postures. Among these, we find Narayana in two forms, one-faced Narayana as well as three-faced

The artistic activities came almost to a standstill with the advent of Islam in 14th century. However, a ray of hope persisted in form of illustrated manuscripts patronised by some Muslim rulers

Vaikuntha. Similarly, Laksmi in most cases is shown seated on the lap of Vishnu, while in other types she is shown standing by the left side of Vaikuntha. In the Laksmi-Vaikuntha image the lower left hand of Vishnu, instead of holding a chakra, is seen gently placed on the head of Chakrapurusha. Such assemblages of peculiarities are hardly seen in any other place in India and this speaks for the uniqueness of Kashmeri Laksmi-Narayana images.

A special mention may be made of the Vasudeva-kamalaja sculptures (Fig. 6) which seem to have begun in Kashmir. It is presumed that the early Vasudeva-Laksmi was evolved with four hands and subsequently, the number of hands was increased to eight. It may be pertinent to observe that the image is described only in late tantric texts. The composite form of deities was fundamentally created to emphasise the conjugal unity or inseparability of the divine couple. At the higher level it is asserted that Purusha and Prakriti, or Shiva and Shakti, are simply two halves of the same absolute truth. In order to stress this concept, the Shaivas and Vaishnavas respectively, created the Ardhanarishvara and Vasudeva-Laksmi images conjointly.

Kashmir produced Hari-Har and Hari-Hara-Pitamaha among the Vaishnavite synretic images.

Continuity of Tradition

The artistic activities came almost to a standstill with the advent of Islam in the 14 century. But still a ray of hope persisted in the form of illustrated manuscripts patronized by some of the Muslim rulers. During Zain-ul-Abidin's rule, Mulla – Ahmad a profound scholar and a poet – translated Mahabharata in Persian, Kashmir has its own version of Bhagavata Purana, which stands preserved in Gottingen Museum Library in Germany. It is the oldest and authentic version whose date can be fixed as 14th century A.D. The manuscript contains many shlokas drawn from other earlier manuscripts. Kashmiri Pandits, known for their learning and erudition, have interpreted the Bhagavad Gita from their own angle of vision. Such interpretations in the form of commentaries are novel in content and incisive in understanding.

The familiarity of Vaishnava cult prevailed in the 18th and 19th century Kashmir is testified by the writings of epics like the Ramayana by Prakash Ram, and Parmanand's renderings of Puranic and epic episodes like Sudama Charita and Radha Svayamvar in Kashmir. Prakash Ram of Kurigam Village has written Rama-avatar-charita in Kashmiri background in which Sita wears a Phiran and Taranga (traditional head gear); the Dandaka forest is full of deodar, pine and popular; Ravana's garden has beds of Kashmiri vegetables. The numerous Gods and Goddesses, who attend the marriage of Rama and Sita, have their abode in the tirthas of Kashmir.

The continuity of Vaishnava tradition is further testified by the celebrations of the festivals like Janmastami, Dipavali and Ramanavami in contemporary Kashmir. The presence of rishidulej (symbolic for Rishi) in the Shivaratri puja (ritualistic) speaks volumes about its significance. ■

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Shaivism in Kashmir and Abhinavagupta

Prof. Navjivan Rastogi

Kashmir in Indian mind has become an embodiment of our most cherished democratic ideals – catholic and humanistic outlook and cultural synthesis. And were we to add that Kashmir is equally the land of philosophical speculation and creative thinking as it is a country of saffron flowers and bunches of grapes (echoing Bilhana: Vikramankdeva Charit 1.21) we need not be accused of resorting to hyperbole. Jayaratha has not failed to take note of these twin peculiarities (T.A.V., XII, p.429) of Kashmir, the seat of Goddess of Learning, with special reference of Kashmir Shaivism. Even the plan and design of the city of Srinagar has been patterned on that of the Shrichakra, according to a tradition current even today (Shrividyanagara).

Kashmir Shaivism is generally believed to be monistic in temper and idealistic in ideology. We have, however, to be very clear that the term Kashmiri Shaivism has extremely wide connotation and includes within its range all the branches of Shaiva speculation-monistic, monistic-cum-dualistic and dualistic associated with Kashmir. If Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka is any guide, the Trika of Kashmir Shaivism stands for the total Tantric lore of Kashmir. It has to be specifically stated that in his magnum opus i.e. Tantraloka (the Light of Tantras), Abhinavagupta dwells on both the diverse currents of thought namely, Tantraprakriya and Kulaprakriya (T.A.V. I, p.24).

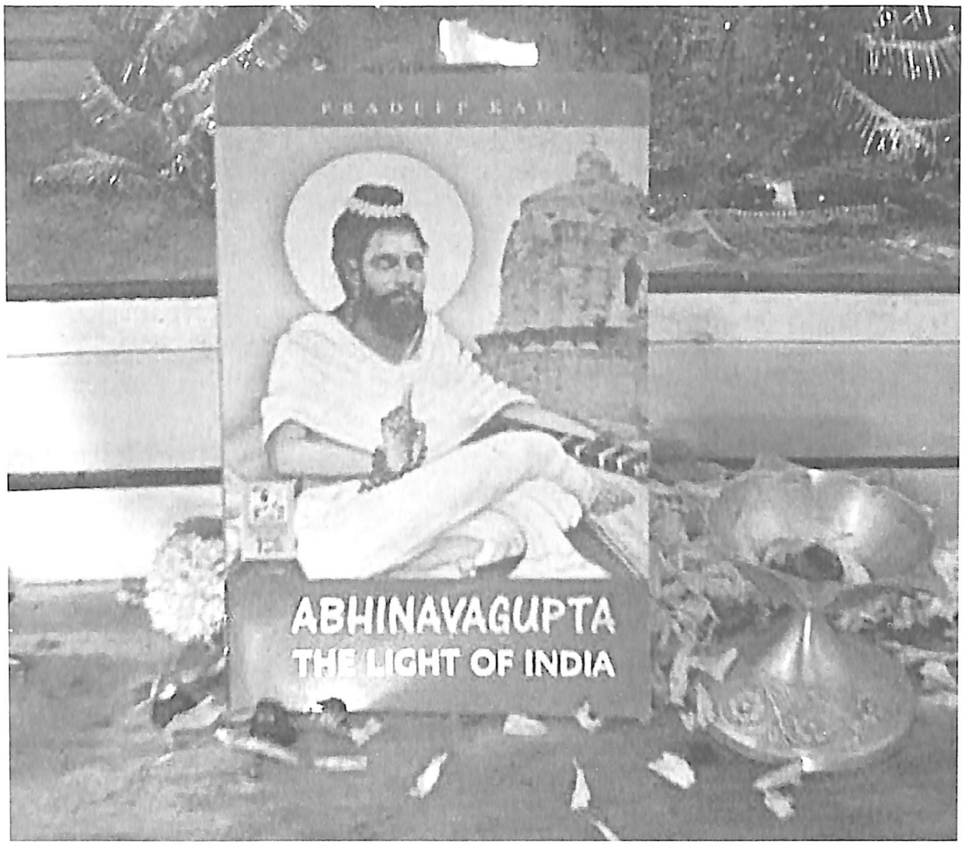
While Tantraprakriya is traced straight to Tryambaka, the first ancestor referred to by Somananda, the Kulaprakriya is traced to Tryambaka through his daughter (T.A.V., I, p. 27) and is therefore designated as Ardha-tryambaka. To be precise, the Kula system is identified with Kulaprakriya, while the three independent monistic systems namely trika, krama and pratyabhijna are subsumed under the Tantraprakriya or the Traiyambaka School. In this scheme, Abhinavagupta does not include the Spanda branch, possibly because of its lack of Tantric character and deep affiliation to the Shakta mode of thinking. This fact has been noted by Kshemaraja, though in a different context (Spanda Nirnaya Page-77) With all their differences, however, they constitute what is precisely meant by Kashmiri Shaivism. So far these four represent the monistic trend of thought.

Alternatively, we might approach the different systems constituting Kashmir Shaivism from the point of view of the lands of their origin. Thus broadly we have two types of schools:

i) Those which originated in Kashmir, and

ii) Others which were originally associated with other parts of the

> Kashmir Shaivism has a wide connotation and includes within its range all the branches – monistic, monistic-cum-dualistic and dualistic



country through the ancestral line of preceptors but were nurtured and developed afresh in Kashmir.

Under the previous head we have Krama, Spanda and Trikasystems which are brought into existence by Shivananda (circa 800), Kallata (circa 825) and Vasugupta (circa 800) respectively. The roots of the Krama system even go much earlier. It is interesting to note that the Krama system has two phases – earlier and later – which evolve into two full-grown schools and may be designated as Northern and Southern schools respectively. The Northern that belongs to Kashmir is Shiva-oriented with obvious Shakta leanings. The Southern School, which also traces its origin to Kashmir, in fact belongs to Chola in Deccan and is primarily Shakti-oriented. Kallata, the first exponent of the Spanda system, is a famous Siddha during the reign of the King Avantivarman (circa 855-883) as recorded by Kalhana. Kallata's Spanda Karika is commented upon by himself, Utpala Vaishnava (10th century), Ramakantha (10th century) and Kshemaraja (10th -11th century). Vasugupta's famous Shivasutras furnish a philosophical foothold to the tantric lore and accord a mystic bias to the Trika line of thought. He is commented upon by Kallata (9th century), Bhaskara (10th century), Kshemaraja, Varadaraja (11th century) and others.

Under the second head may be placed kula and Pratyabhijna. Of the two, the kula system – as propagated by Abhinavagupta – by and large appears to be of non-Kashmiri origin. Abhinavagupta owes his initiation into the system to one Shambhunatha who hailed from Jalandhara and has received deepest veneration at the hands of the former. The alien origin of the kula system is further corroborated by Jayaratha's observation that the Vamakeshvari branch of the system was promulgated in Kashmir by Ishvarashiva (9th century), the celebrated author of the Rasamahodadhi and Sankara Rasi (9th century) (Vamakeshvarimatavivaranam of Jayaratha, Page-48). Jayaratha seems to have inherited this tradition direct from Vishvavarta (9th century), who happens to be a precursor of Sambhunatha. Somananda, Abhinava's great-grand teacher in pratyabhijna, also wrote a commentary on the Paratrimsika, avowedly a kula/ Trika Tantra. It, therefor, appears certain that its alien character could not be sustained any longer so much so that this system is represented by the Southern School of the kula system to which was originated in Kashmir. However, this kulaculminates in Pratyabhijna that is anupaya, according to Abhinavagupta's own verdict in the Tantraloka.

On the threshold of the Pratyabhijna system, though we notice that ancestral lineages of the two stalwarts of the system, Somananda and Abhinavagupta, were brought to Kashmir from outside, yet the enormous gap that entailed between their settling down and taking to philosophical exposition hardly justifies us to treat them as immigrants. Thus Somananda (9th century) is credited with breaking an entirely new ground towards human emancipation and furnishing a logical and rational basis in his Shivadrishti for the scattered tantric ideals (Ishvara Pratyabhijnakarika 4.1.16). He is rightly hailed as the 'originator

Adi Sankara's Kashmir Sojourn

Jagadguru Adi Sankara Bhagwatpada who was born in year 2631 of Yudhishthira Samvat (YS) visited Kashmir in the year 2662 of YS as a part of his nationwide campaign of Digvijaya Abhyan for establishing Advaita Vedanta. The details of his visit are maintained at Kanchipeeth which are well recorded in treatise called Madhaviya Sankara Vijaya.

The great Sankara, the propounder of Vedanta, is credited with opening the fourth door of Sharda Peetha. This Peetha was known as a seat of higher learning and was famous not only in Kashmir but throughout India for its distinction based scholarship. The Peetha still continues to be revered as its presiding deity is Sharda Devi who bestows wisdom and knowledge to the human kind. This Peetha was equal in excellence to the likes of Takshishila and Nalanda, where Kings, scholars, saints, rishis, regents of all denominations visited to gain mastery of various doctrines and attain the highest degree of learning.

Adi Sankara during his visit to Ganga was informed by his disciples about the grandeur of Kashmir in general and that of the shrine at Sharda Peetha in particular.

The shrine was constructed like mandapa with four doorways opening towards the sanctum sanatorium containing the 'Seat of Omniscience' (Sarvajnya Peetha). Only the one who is 'Omniscient' was to ascend the throne and it was not to be opened for others. Scholars from east, west, north who stood the test earlier to prove their omniscience were allowed to enter through these doors pertaining to these directions. Adi Sankara was also informed that the door in the southern direction was yet to be opened. On hearing this, Adi Sankara, who was from south, felt an earnest desire to visit the Sharda Peetha and obliterate the stigma of southerner's inability to prove their omniscience and establish the supremacy of Advaita. With this aim in mind, Adi Sankara started off soon to the temple of Sharda in Kashmir.

Debate with Scholars

As Adi Sankara approached the southern gate with a view to open it, a group of scholars approached him and challenged him to prove his knowledge on all schools of philosophy and thus establish his omniscience that is to be called a master of all branches of learning.

The Vaiseshika atomists, Naiyayika Logicians, Samkhya, Buddhists from both Vijnanyavad and Sautrantika's, Digambar Jaina, Purvamimansa and others engaged Sankara and asked questions, to which the latter replied comprehensively. He thus proved his knowledge of various prevailing systems and also proved to his detractors the superiority of Advaita. Thereafter, the southern door of the Peethawas opened. At the end, Goddess Sharda herself administered the final test, the Sankara passed successfully. His conduct and performance at Sharda proved to the world that Adi Sankara was worthy of the honor of ascending to the throne of 'Omniscience', both because his character and the wisdom he possessed.

At the end, the title of Jagad Guru was conferred on Sankara at Sharda Peetha.

Legends about Visit

As per the local legend, it is believed that Sankara and his entourage, while camping outside Srinagar, were in dilemma as they were not able to cook food due to non-availability of fire. At this point a young daughter of a scholar visited them and offered help. It is said that the girl took up thin wooden sticks into her hand and rubbed them while chanting mantras, thus producing fire, much to the surprise of Sankara. Later, a debate took place between the girl and Sankara and the later accepted the predominance of Shakti worship. Pleased with young girl's mastery, Sankara granted her distinctive head dress called Taranga which has long serpent like cloth covering the braided hair which represents Kundalini shakti and which is even now worn by new brides among Kashmiri Hindu women as a part of the bridal wear during their marriage ceremonies.

Sankaracharya Temple

Sankara wrote Saundarya Lahiri in Kashmir at a place which is now famously known as Sankaracharya Temple overlooking the city of Srinagar. There is a small cave adjacent to the temple where it is believed that the Acharya had performed penance. The poem occupies prime place among the stotras written by him. In these cadence of hundred verses a detailed explanation of esoteric worship of Sri Chakra as well as soul touching description of Devi's form is embodied. In Kashmir, Adi Sankara also wrote another poem, Gauri Stuti, which is daily recited by Hindus of Kashmir where Acharya implores devotees that supreme objective of Shakti worship is Advaita realisation. In Dakshnamurthi Stotra Adi Sankara uses various Kashmiri Shaivism terms to explain the world phenomenon. The terms of Pratiyabijnya philosophy are used to explain the world as a mirror projection, where soul is caught up due to nescience in the quagmire of being and becoming. True nature of self and the truth of nonduality is explained.

Shankaracharya Temple

As per Chidvilasiya, treatise the discussion of Sankara with Mandan Misra took place in Kashmir, where finally Sankara won the shastrarth and made Mandan his disciple. He later established Shringeri Peethain south along with the Acharya.

Acharya Adi Sankara completed his Digvijaya Abhyan and established the Vedanta doctrine in the social, cultural and religious landscape of India which still attracts great veneration and devotion among seekers of truth and is practiced by Hindus even today. It is widely accepted that Adi Sankara attained great spiritual depth only after visiting Kashmir. The visit created such an impact on him that he vowed to establish similar centers of learning; the first of which is the Peetha at Shringeri, dedicated to Goddess Sharda of Kashmir.

- Sunil Raina Rajanaka

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of the reasoning' (tarkasyakarta). He is followed by a galaxy of great authors like Utpala, Lakshmanagupta, Kshemaraja, Yogaraja, Jayaratha and others. Utpala enlarges the scope and consolidates the rational side of the system in his learned commentary on the Shivadristi and his independent treatises like Ishvara Pratyabhijna-karika and Siddhitrayi, marking logical continuation of his master work. Through Lakshmanagupta, the author of Shrishastra, he was succeeded by Abhinavgupta (circa 950-1020), greatest of all Kashmirian thinkers and one of the greatest among the Indian luminaries. Abhinavagupta is credited with the authorship of more than 42 works. Of these the Tantraloka, Vimarshinee and Brihati Vimarshinee on Utpala's karikas and Vivritti respectively, Vivarana on the Para trimshika, Locana on the Dhvanyaloka and Abhinavabharata on the Natya Shastra are the works of supreme value and have been serving as reference books in their respective fields for centuries. He, with his unparalleled genius, synoptic vision, profound textual exposure and creative insight, enriched and illuminated the Shaiva philosophy, Tantric culture and aesthetic thought all at the same time. In him Somananda's aim of establishing the system on sound footing, against the onslaughts of the Buddhists, grammarians, Shakta monists, and Shaiva dualists, a hint to which is obviously discernible in the preamble of the Shiva-sutra-vartika of Varadaraja (S.S. Va. 1.1) is realised for good.

Coming to the thought content of these systems, they broadly agree on fundamental principles. Their mutual differences centred around varying orientations and emphases, which needs detailed treatment. Their originality lies in the novel approach to the problems of philosophy and human emancipation which may be summed up as below:

i. Reality is consciousness, not only pure but perfect also Perfection and totality result in self-spontaneous manifestation of the absolute as psycho-metaphysical subjectivity on the one hand and objective data on the other

ii. Reality, though kinetic, is continuous and suffers no gap. This is brought about by tantric transformation of the Saankhya thesis of saadrishya parinamavada into abhasavada, that of saamya (perfect harmony of three gunasin Prakrti) into samarasya of the subjective and the objective. In addition, the concept of parinama nityata and kutasthanityata, enunciated by Mahabhashyakara and Vyasa, in his Bhashya on the Yogasootra, referring to different states of beings, are condensed and fused into one as Maheshvara, the dynamic Absolute or autonomous consciousness (svatantrasamvit)

iii. The autonomy of consciousness by its very implication, reconciles contradictions (paraspara parihara) and synthesises dichotomy of the subjective and objective of the dualists into pure, perfect and intuitive experience. Thus, the ultimate unity is not an abstract unity but a concrete one. In the words of Prof. Pandey, "It is not only the unity of opposites, as Hegel maintains his Absolute to be, but also the unity of distinct as Croce maintains." (Comparative Aesthetics, Vol. 1: Indian, p. 101). Hence the Reality is the essentially unity containing multiplicity within.

iv. Theautonomyi.e.,selfspontaneity of consciousness, also renders the entire casual explanation futile and dogmatic. In Hegel the instances of reality are 'deduced' from absolute. here they are 'manifested' or 'expressed'. The cosmic law of causation is, therefore, transformed into the Absolutic functionalism.

v. This perfect consciousness is not something remote but essentially identical with self-consciousness and is an ever present point of reference in every experience – actual or possible.

vi. Such a view of reality revolutionises the very mode and method of our time-old thinking and the following conclusions, of necessity, emerge:

   a. Axiologically, emancipation of human soul is the highest value. Here moksha consists of inculcation of synthesis of worldly enjoyment/acquisition of powers (that is perfections) and transcendental experience of the self (bhoga-moksha-samarasyat mahmokshah). The world is liberation in changed perspective.

   b. Not with standing their mutual divergences, most Indian schools are unanimous that mukti follows in the wake of distinguishing the Self from the not-Self. On the contrary, here the self-realisation consists in synthesis of these two opposites and rules out the negation of either.

   c. Self-realisation is, therefore, 'recognition' (Pratyabhijna). Whatever has been passing through as 'this' hitherto, is now recognised as 'I', because of intrinsic oneness of their character as freedom andconsciousness, technically called autonomous agentiality and subjectivity (kartritva and jnatritva)

   d. Hence, knowledge is not 'knowing afresh' but 'knowing the known', that is the removal of the veil of ignorance which is defined as imperfect knowledge (apurnam-manyata)

   e. Such a view of reality, apart from its epistemic implications, contains cultural margin of no mean consequence. It has a very optimistic appeal and culminates into deep commitment to life, putting a seal of approval on all that life contains or stands for. This may be termed as a life-affirming attitude of the tantric culture which makes it a truly humanistic movement where all spiritual pathways form part and represent particular dimensions of an integrated whole (Pratyabhijna-hridaya, Sootra8) and cease to be isolated events where entire mankind is openly welcomed to the threshold of true wisdom irrespective of caste, creed, gender and status (Gitarthasangraha of Abhinavagupta, 9.32).■

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Abbreviations

Sp.N.	Spandanirmaya
S.S.Va.	Shiva-sutra-vartika
T.A.V	Tantraloka-viveka
Vik.	Vikramankadevacarita

Col. Tej K. Tikoo, PhD

Emperor Lalitaditya

Lalitaditya is rated among the world's greatest warriors of all time. During his rule, Kashmir came to be recognised as the centre of vast military power in Asia

Lalitaditya of the Karkotta dynasty arose to power in 724 CE. During his long rule of 37 years (724-761), he established himself among the greatest soldier-statesmen of all time. While presiding over his vast empire, he took it to unprecedented heights of prosperity and influence, giving a fillip to art, culture, architecture and literature. Well being of his people remained his life-long passion. Though a Shaivite himself, he was sympathetic to the philosophy of Buddha, whose influence in Kashmir at that time was substantial. For a nation which (historically) rarely expanded beyond its territorial boundaries, Lalitaditya was an exception.

Buddhism had established deep roots in Kashmir after Kanishka of the great Kushan dynasty had held the Great Council of Buddhists at Kanishpura - present day Harwan – close to Srinagar city. It is widely believed that Kashmir at that time possessed four Ashok Chaityas; each containing a small relic of Buddha's body. The sacred tooth relic of Buddha, which was also with the King, was taken away by Harshavardhana.

Karkotta dynasty, to which Lalitaditya belonged, rose to power in Kashmir in 631 CE. For decades, Nagvanshi Karkotta Kayasthas served in the army of the Kings of Kashmir and were known for their valour in war. As a reward for their loyalty and soldierly acumen, they had been given the title of Sakhsena. Around 624 CE, a well-known commander of this immensely powerful army, Durlabh Vardana, married the Kashmir King's daughter. This, subsequently, resulted in the establishment of Karkotta dynasty that eventually ruled Kashmir till 855 CE.

Just before the ascendance of Karkotta dynasty in Kashmir in 631, the struggle between the two contending philosophies – Buddhism and Hinduism – had come to an end with the re-emergence of Hinduism as a strong faith. This period (prior to the Karkotta dynasty) saw two outstanding rulers of Kashmir – Meghavama and Prawarsena – both of whom left their imprint on the history. Prawarsena was the first to move the capital city to Srinagar, which at that time, was known by the name of Prawarsenapura. The king is also remembered for constructing the first bridge across Vitasta with the help of boats.

It is pertinent to mention that during this period King Vikramaditya, who ruled from his capital at Ujjain, had exercised loose suzerainty over Kashmir.

With the ascendance of Karkotta dynasty, the Hindu Kingdom of Kashmir reached great heights of power and prestige. Its influence and fame spread far and wide

General view of temple and enclosure of Martand or the Sun Temple in Kashmir. Probable date of temple 490-555 A.D.. Photograph taken by John Burke in 1868. This general view from the hillside looking down onto the ruins of the temple was reproduced in Henry Hardy Cole's Archaeological Survey of India Report 'Illustrations of Ancient Buildings in Kashmir (1869).

and in the process, it attracted respect and received tribute from neighboring kingdoms. Durlabh Vardana extended his kingdom to Poonch, Rajauri, Taxila and Hazara and consequently, controlled trade routes between Kashmir and Afghanistan. It was during his rule that celebrated Chinese traveller, Huein Tsang, visited Kashmir and stayed there for two years between 631 and 633 CE[1]. Huein Tsang was provided all the facilities to study Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit and was treated with courtesy. He was extended great hospitality.

In the meantime, it was King Harsha who ascended to the throne in Ujjain who too continued with the existing relationship with Kashmir.

Karkotta dynasty's greatest King, Lalitaditya Muktapida (mo-to-pi in Chinese)[2] was born around the turn of the ninth century. Lalitaditya was the third son of Durlabhaka Pratapaditya, who was the grandson of Durlabh Vardhana. After the death of Pratapaditya, his eldest son, Chandrapida, became the king of Kashmir at a very young age. Chandrapida was known as a courageous king with simple disposition. After ruling for just seven years, he suddenly passed away. This ensured that the next in line of succession, Tarapida, ascended to the throne. His ascension resulted in mis-governance, as he lacked courage and administrative acumen. His sudden death after 18 months of rule paved the way for Lalitaditya to take over the kingdom of Kashmir at the age of 20.

Not much is known about the early life of Laitaditya. However, being the youngest of the three sons of King Durlabhaka Pratapaditiya, it can safely be concluded that he must have undergone thorough training in the art of statecraft under the watchful eyes of his father and his two elder brothers. Besides, he must have been exposed to the contrasting styles of governance of his two elder brothers, which must have made him conscious of his true duties towards his kingdom.

Lalitaditya faced many challenges immediately after ascending to the throne of Kashmir. Around this time, the Arab invaders from the west had started pushing towards Asia and had occupied the provinces of Swat, Multan, Peshawar, and the Kingdom of Sindh to the south. Mohamad Bin Qasim, the Arab General, who had captured Sindh in 712 CE, was eying the kingdom of Kashmir and then expand his territories to Central Asia.

The local rebellions launched by Daradas[3] on the outskirts of this Kingdom and Bhuthias of Ladakh to the north, who were under the loose suzerainty of Tibet, were the other challenges that Lalitaditya had to contend with immediately.

Lalitaditya, as a first step, chose to subdue these rebellious

Lalitaditya faced many challenges immediately on ascending to the throne of Kashmir. Around this time, the Arab invaders from the west had started pushing towards Asia

subjects. He soon succeeded in establishing order in the immediate vicinity of his capital and far off Ladakh and parts of Tibet. He also decided to venture south from Kashmir to ensure that Arabs did not pose a direct threat to Kashmir. By the time the threat posed by the marauding Arabs became serious, Lalitaditya's rule extended to the present-day Haryana and north Punjab. His march into Punjab was not marked by much bloodshed as the people willingly submitted to him.

Lalitaditya was not satisfied with merely defending the territorial integrity of his kingdom but wanted to take the battle into the territories captured by the Arab marauders

At the same time (around 730 CE) Junaid, who had been appointed as the Governor of Sindh, was keen to expand his territory further to north and east, into mainland India. At this time, Yashovarman, who was the King of Ujjain, ruled over vast territories, comprising the present-day Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, parts of Bengal and Jharkhand. Yashovarman and Lalitaditya soon realised the gravity of the threat to their respective kingdoms and therefore, entered into military alliance. This alliance ensured that Junaid's well laid plans to extend his territory into India never fructified. It is said that Lalitaditya had been very upset at the treatment meted out to the Hindus of the territories captured by the Arabs. In retribution, he ordered the captured Arab soldiers to shave off a part of their heads.

Lalitaditya was not satisfied with merely defending the territorial integrity of his kingdom but wanted to take the battle into the territories captured by the Arab marauders. In a swift move, he captured Dard Desha (Dardistan) and Tukhara country (Tukharistan), which encompass the present-day territories of north Pakistan, north-eastern regions of Afghanistan, Turkestan (which include the modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, south Kyrgyzstan and south west Kazakhstan). It may be mentioned that the whole region then boasted of extensive Kashmiri traditions and learning, thanks to the efforts of numerous Kashmiri monks who had established many Kashmiri settlements in several cities of Central Asia. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that Kashmiri Armies under Lalitaditya gained some easy victories. He, however, faced tough resistance from the ruler of Bukhara. Finally, after three failed attempts the Bukhara King decided to surrender. Lalitaditya accepted the surrender after the former decided to pay tribute. Kalhan,[4] the celebrated 12th century author of Rajatarangini[5] describes the battle thus:

"The master, which transported his power, abandoned his (war-like) fury (only) whenever opposing leaders discretely folded their particular palms at their victorious sun set. On noise of their drums (out done) in assault, the dwellings of their enemies were diverted because of the (frightened) residents and thus resembled ladies dropping in fright the duty of these wombs."

Lalitaditya's Army mostly comprised of recruits from the north, including his famous General Cankuniya. The T'ang Dynasty's gradual decline also helped Lalitaditya to attract their dissatisfied, though skilful and experienced soldiers to his Army. The fact that Cankuniya had already been bestowed with the title of Cankiun-General by the Chinese much before he joined Lalitaditya's Army, proves that the former must have been a formidable general when he joined the Kashmir Forces.

In the mean while, the relations between Lalitaditya and Yashovarman deteriorated due to contending claims about some territorial issues. This led to the hostilities breaking out between the two. Yashovarman initially submitted to Lalitaditya peacefully, but while the final draft of the treaty was being prepared, some dispute cropped up between the two. This led to the resumption of the hostilities in which Lalitaditya emerged victorious. This victory ensured that Kannauj and Yashovarman's vast territories came to be occupied by Lalitaditya. Later, he took his campaigns to the east, as far as Gaud and Vanga (the present-day Bengal), expanding his territories deep into eastern India.

One of the rare black spots on Lalitaditya concerns the princess of Gaud, who was assassinated, while under captivity in the Kashmir kingdom. Kalhana is unsparing in his criticism.

While the great king was busy with his campaigns in central and eastern India, Tibet started posing a serious threat to the northern and north eastern territories of his vast kingdom. China at that time was ruled by T'ang Dynasty which, during the earlier part of its reign had gradually extended its frontiers towards the west. During Durlaba Vardana's rule over Kashmir, China had conquered important trade centres like Kuchha, Khotan, Khorasan and Kashgar and had thus reached the very frontiers of Kashmir.[6]

The Chinese threat became grave during the reign of Chandrapida, when the Chinese Army had crossed into Baltistan and overran it. A few years before this, Chandrapida had sent an emissary to the Chinese Court for soliciting assistance from the Chinese to counter the threat posed by the Arabs to Kashmir King in the Kabul Valley. It may be mentioned that Arabs were equally inimical towards the Chinese too. There appears to be no evidence on record to categorically establish the Chinese reaction to this request, one way or the other. Nevertheless, one can infer from historical records that around circa 720, Chandrapida was accorded the title of king on the Chinese imperial roll. It is quite apparent that Chinese rulers seemed to enjoy good relations with Kashmir and that was perhaps the reason why the Chinese did not enter Kashmir territory after over-running Baltistan.

Nevertheless, be it as it may, one thing was very clear to the Kashmir ruler; if the Kashmir Kingdom had to survive Lalitaditya could hardly overlook the ever-existing threat of Chinese to his kingdom from the north. To ensure his kingdom's safety and guard against Chinese rolling down from the north, Kashmir ruler had to bring the trans-Himalayan territories of Central Asia under its direct rule.

To take on the new threat posed by Tibet, Lalitaditya decided to approach the T'ang Dynasty of China for help. By the time Lalitaditya secured the Kashmir throne, T'ang dynasty, which had been at the zenith of its power in the seventh century, had lost much of its sheen with Tibetan Chiefs nibbling away at its territories in Central China. To get the Chinese on his side to form an alliance against Tibet, Lalitaditya sent his ambassador to Chinese Court during the rule of Yuen Tsun. The Chinese records mention that"Mukhtapida (Mo-to-pi), the king of Kashmir, sent his ambassador, U-Li-To to the Chinese court to seek aid from the Emperor against Tibet".[7]

The ambassador tried convincing the Chinese that it would be in their interests to support Lalitaditya in his campaigns against the Tibetans before the latter became strong enough to gobble both, one by one. A request was made for their infantry, numbering approximately 200000, to be stationed on the shores of Mahapadama Lake (now Wular Lake). The Ambassador also told the Chinese that Laitaditya had succeeded in blocking all routes to Tibet through Central Asia and therefore, once the Chinese joined him, the victory over Tibet was assured. Though the Ambassador was received with courtesy and extended all hospitality due to a visiting envoy of a famous and strong king, the Chinese did not render any assistance worth the name. It is quite possible that the Chinese were, at that time, themselves busy in suppressing the rebellion launched against the Chinese King by General GanLah Shan, a high-ranking officer of Turkish descent in their Army.

The Chinese threat became grave earlier during the reign of Chandrapida, when the Chinese Army had crossed into Baltistan and overran it

Lalitaditya took on the Tibetans in 736 CE.Rajatarangini mentions that apart from subjugating the entire Ladakh and some western provinces of Tibet through these expeditions, he did not appear to have succeeded in bringing the whole of Tibet under his control. Kalhana mentions that those days victories gained over adversaries were usually celebrated annually. Alberuni further says that Kashmiris observed the second of Chaitra as the day of Lalitaditya's victory over Tibet.[8] It, therefore, establishes that the victory over Tibet was not small in scale but was substantial in its dimension.

Later, Lalitaditya seems to have added more territories to his already vast empire. Kucha, Turfan and Assam and parts of present day Bengal – which were under the suzerainty of Tibet Kings – became part of Lalitaditya's eastern frontiers.

Lalitaditya, however, was not satisfied with his victories. Like Alexander, his exploits of conquests had filled this tireless warrior with an ambitious desire to capture the whole world with a vast army at his disposal. Kalhan quotes Lalitaditya's speech to his own ministers in Rajtarangani:

Lalitadiya's achievements were not restricted to his military conquests alone, though these were of immense proportions by every standard. His administration was efficient and people–friendly

"For rivers which have set out from their own region, the ocean is the limit, but nowhere is there a limit for those who are frankly aspiring to be conquerors."

Though his prolonged campaigns in distant lands would at times dampen the enthusiasm of his soldiers, Lalitaditya had a unique way of rekindling the dampened spirits of his tired soldiers. Kalhan writes again:

"Though disliked by the Generals who were uneasy at the prolonged duration of the war, the King thought highly of his demand of strict observance of form!"

Lalitaditya's magnanimous treatment of his subjugated kings and the peoples of the captured territories also helped his war effort in many ways.

He started assembling a modern army of huge proportions, well-equipped with advanced weapons and armored cavalry. His campaigns, thereafter, saw him taking on the territory of modern-day Maharashtra (Konkan) in the south west, Pallavas and Kalinga in the south and parts of China in the north. At its zenith, his empire stretched from Iran in the west, Tibet and parts of China in the north, Turkestan in the north-west, Cauvery and Dwarka in the south and south - west, and Assam in the north - east. Kashmir justifiably came to be recognised as the centre of a vast military power of Asia.

Lalitaditya must certainly be rated among the world's greatest warriors of all time. Through his mind-boggling conquests his territories extended to as far as River Cauveryin the south, Afghanistan to the west, Gaud (North Bengal) in the east and Ladakh and portions of Tibet in the north. Some historians credit him with the conquest of Iran and Badakhshan too.

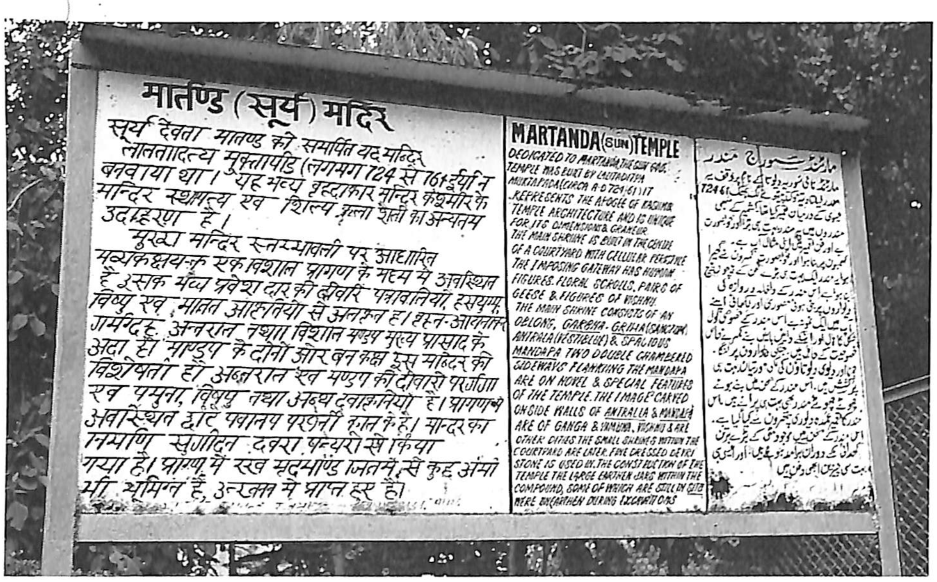
Lalitaditya's victories ensured that Kashmir's power and prestige reached its zenith during his rule.

Lalitadiya's achievements were not restricted to his military conquests alone, though these were of immense proportions by everystandard. Hisadministration was efficient and people–friendly. One of his greatest welfare measures he took was to rid the Valley of constant flooding, which used to prevent huge tracts of land from being cultivated. Through his engineers, he learnt that the flooding was mainly due to silting-up of the river-bed at Baramulla. He was the first king to realise that by cleaning the bed of rocks and silt, the flow of water could be hastened, and consequently, the water level would fall. This would permit many submerged tracts of land becoming available to the people for cultivation. He put the process into motion. This resulted in the drying up of numerous swamps, which then became available for sowing crop. He also got bunds constructed around low lying areas, thereby reclaiming these for cultivation. He got numerous canals constructed to ensure that water-starved areas too were brought under cultivation. Kalhana mentions that he got water-wheels constructed for taking water to Chakradara and many other karewas[9] to reclaim the land for cultivation. These measures brought many uncultivated stretches of land under cultivation. Consequently, production of crops increased, adding greatly to the prosperity and well-being of the people.

To commemorate some of his outstanding victories, he founded many new towns like Suniscatapur and Darpitapur. Unfortunately, today there are no signs extant of these towns. Lalitaditya also built the town of Phalapura and Parontsa. The former today is a village near Shadipur, and the latter is now known as the town of Poonch. Lalitaditya is also credited with having built the town of Lalitapura (modern day Letapura) where he built a large temple, and Lokpunya (modern day Lukhbhavan) on the Anantnag-Verinag Road. During the later period, this town became famous for serving as the centre of Damara rebellion. At Hushkapura (the present-day Ushkur - the site of many archaeological excavations), he is said to have constructed a big vihara and a Buddhist temple. It may be mentioned that the Chinese traveller Ou' Kong used this vihara as his resting place during his travels.

As a builder, two of his greatest creations among many, were the Sun Temple at Martand and his new capital city of Parihaspura. Auriel Stein[10] writes:

"It is no longer possible to trace with certainty the sites and remains of all the temples



मार्तण्ड (सूर्य) मन्दिर

सूर्य देवता मार्तण्ड को समर्पित यह मन्दिर ललितादित्य मुक्तापीड (लगभग 724 से 761 ईस्वी) ने बनवाया था। यह भव्य वृहदाकार मन्दिर कश्मीर के मन्दिर स्थापत्य एवं शिल्प कला शैली का अन्यतम उदाहरण है।

मुख्य मन्दिर स्तम्भावली पर आधारित प्रकोष्ठयुक्त एक विशाल प्रांगण के मध्य में अवस्थित है इसके भव्य प्रवेश द्वार की दीवारें पत्रावलियों, हंसयुग्म, विष्णु एवं मानव आकृतियों से अलंकृत हैं। आयताकार गर्भगृह, अन्तराल तथा विशाल मण्डप मुख्य प्रासाद के अंग हैं। मण्डप के दोनों ओर बने कक्ष इस मन्दिर की विशेषता हैं। अन्तराल एवं मण्डप की दीवारों पर गंगा एवं यमुना, विष्णु तथा अन्य देवाकृतियाँ हैं। प्रांगण में अवस्थित छोटे देवालय परवर्ती काल के हैं। मन्दिर का निर्माण सुगठित देवरी पत्थरों से किया गया है। प्रांगण में रखे मृदभाण्ड जिनमें से कुछ अभी भी भूमिगत हैं, उत्खनन में प्राप्त हुए हैं।

MARTANDA (SUN) TEMPLE

DEDICATED TO MARTANDA THE SUN GOD. TEMPLE WAS BUILT BY LALITADITYA MUKTAPIDA (CIRCA A.D 724-61) IT REPRESENTS THE APOGEE OF KASHMIR TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AND IS UNIQUE FOR ITS DIMENSIONS & GRANDEUR. THE MAIN SHRINE IS BUILT IN THE CENTRE OF A COURTYARD WITH CELLULAR PERISTYLE. THE IMPOSING GATEWAY HAS HUMAN FIGURES. FLORAL SCROLLS, PAIRS OF GEESE & FIGURES OF VISHNU. THE MAIN SHRINE CONSISTS OF AN OBLONG, GARBHA-GRIHA (SANCTUM) ANTRALA (VESTIBULE) & SPACIOUS MANDAPA. TWO DOUBLE CHAMBERED SIDEWAYS FLANKING THE MANDAPA ARE ON NOVEL & SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE TEMPLE. THE IMAGE CARVED ON SIDE WALLS OF ANTRALA & MANDAPA ARE OF GANGA & YAMUNA, VISHNU & ARE OTHER DITIES. THE SMALL SHRINES WITHIN THE COURTYARD ARE LATER. FINE DRESSED DEVRI STONE IS USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. THE LARGE EARTHEN JARS WITHIN THE COMPOUND, SOME OF WHICH ARE STILL IN SITU WERE UNEARTHEN DURING EXCAVATIONS

By Gaurav Kumar - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0 (Wikimedia Commons)

and structures which owed their existence to Lalitaditya. But those among them which can be identified, justify by their extant ruins the great fame which Lalitaditya enjoyed as a builder. The ruins of the splendid temple at Martand, which the King had constructed near the Tirtha of the same name, are still the most striking objects of ancient Hindu architecture in the valley. Even in their present state of decay, they command admiration, both by their imposing dimensions and by the beauty of their architectural design and decoration."

To preside over his vast empire, he built a magnificent capital, Parihaspura, (city of pleasures) just opposite to the junction of Sindh and Jhelum Rivers in Ganderbal District of Kashmir, well away from the flood plains and marshes. Its site was carefully chosen right in the centre of the Valley from where all higher peaks and the complete circle of snowy mountain ranges are visible. In 1892, when Stein discovered these ruins, he commented on Kalhana's description of the ruins in Rajtarangani, thus[11]:

"Kalhana describes at length the series of great temples built by the King at this town. The extensive, though much injured ruins with which I was able to identify these structures at the site of Parihaspura, the present Paraspur, show sufficiently that Kalhana's account of their magnificence was not exaggerated."

Unfortunately, Parihaspura soon lost its importance, as Lalitaditya's son Vajraditiya removed the royal residence from there. And later, Suyya's re-laid drainage system during Avantivarman's rule (855-883) brought the confluence of Vitasta and Sindhu from Parihasapura to Shadipur, which naturally affected the importance of the town.[12] Later, Shankaravarman (883-901) used the materials of Parihaspura for building his new town at Pattan and later Harsa (1089-1101) seized some of the gold and silver images of the temple, which existed there till then. In the subsequent unrest the whole town was burnt down.

To preside over his vast empire, Lalitaditya built a magnificent capital, Parihaspura, just opposite to the junction of Sindh and Jhelum Rivers in Ganderbal District of Kashmir

The greatest legacy of Lalitaditya was the construction of Sun Temple at Martand in south Kashmir. The Temple was built over Mattan Karewa which provided a magnificent view of Kashmir Valley, as far as the Pir Panjal Ranges.

Being a symbol of the zenith of Hindu rulers of Kashmir, the temple received a special treatment from Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 CE) who is known as Sikander Butshikan (Sikander, the idol breaker).

"Sultan Sikander was a religious fanatic, who would put even the worst bigot to shame. Muslim historian, Hassan, describes that Sikander let loose a reign of terror, an orgy of violence and cruelty on Hindus, with the sole aim of converting them to Islam. All their temples in the cities, towns and villages were desecrated and the idols within those temples, creation of unparalleled workmanship, vandalised and destroyed. The material collected from these temples was used to construct 'Khankahs'."[13]

Lalitaditya's patronage of arts, crafts, literature, dance, drama and architecture was legendary.[14] Despite the fact that his military campaigns took him far away from Kashmir, he encouraged and patronised great scholars of his time, like

By Mike Prince from Bangalore - Martand Sun Temple, CC BY 2.0 (Wikimedia Commons)

Manorath, Sakhdanta, Damodar Gupta and Udhata Bhata. He welcomed talented persons from all over and many learned people from India and far off countries paid visit to his court, where they were treated with dignity and honour. He had succeeded in getting two famous poets – Bhavabhuti and Vaktapraja – from Kannauj – after the defeat of Yasovarman – and gave them the honour and prestige due to them, under an imperial order. He also liberally set up many viharas, which became centres of learning. "Kashmir became the synagogue of foreign scholars and many cultural missions set out from the country," writes one scholar.

Lalitaditya's greatness lay in being highly tolerant of other faiths and his generosity towards subjugated kings. Although a staunch Hindu, he showed equal respect to Buddhists and built many Buddhist temples and monasteries. His own Commander-in-Chief Cankuniya was a Buddhist and so were his many high ranking officials.

Lalitaditya's unprecedented military victories had not turned him into an arrogant and dictatorial ruler. He was a compassionate king, whose people-centric administration gained him much love and admiration. He was a wise ruler and an able administrator, who improved every aspect of his peoples' lives. He ushered in an era of national glory, peace and prosperity. During his rule, the cultivators received special consideration by being provided with irrigation facilities and relief during calamities. Several charitable institutions where set up, where the poor were fed throughout the year and the needy were taken care of.

Lalitaditya's death was shrouded in mystery. There are two versions. One thing common in both is that he died during an expedition to the north. Kalhana mentions that he "perished through heavy snow-storm in Aryanaka (modern day Iran). According to another version, he, along with his small detachment, ended their lives by suicide to escape from being captured by the enemy when they got separated from their main Army column and was blocked on a difficult mountain pass somewhere in Sinkiang".[15]

His glorious reign served as a beacon light to the Kashmiris of later generations, particularly during their subjugation by cruel and oppressive rulers. Historians have failed to give him a place of honour which he duly deserved. ■

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The greatest legacy of Lalitaditya was the construction of Sun Temple at Martand. The Temple was built over Mattan Karewa which provided a magnificent view of Kashmir valley

References:

1 Kashmir : Its Aborigines and their Exodus, Lancer Publishers and

Distributers, New Delhi

2. "Auriel Stein in his translation of verse 42 in Book IV of Rajatarangini says: "Subsequently, Queen Narendraprabha, wife of King Durlabhaka Pratipaditikya bore the King a second son. Muktapida might be interpreted to mean 'he whom diadem is taken off.' Kalhana, bearing in mind the greatness of the ruler (Muktapida) says 'his name ought to have been Avimukhtapida. However, the proper translation of Muktapida is, 'he whose diadem contains pearls' (See Bughler). Muktapida is an adjectival suffix to the name of the King Lalitaditya Muktapida. Mukta could also be the Prakritised version of Ou-Kong's (Chinese traveller) Moung-ti from which Kashmirian 'Muttoo' is derived." Dr K. N. Pandita.
3. Feudal Chieftains, living on the outskirts of Kashmir Valley, who later seized power in Kashmir briefly 1286 and 1301 CE living on the outskirts of Kashmir Valley.
4. One of the most renowned and oft quoted historians of India, Kalhan Pandit wrote the celebrated 'Rajtarangini' (River of Kings), between 1147 and 1149 CE. Rajtarangini is one of the most authentic works of history anywhere in the world and an invaluable source of the events of medieval Indian history. He is considered to be the first among the many historians of Kashmir. Jonaraja, Srivara and Suka were other great historians of Kashmir who added to Kalhan's Rajtarangini and updated from where Kalhan had finised it to the time Mughals annexed Kashmir in the middle of 16th century.
5. Rajatarangini (lit. "River of Kings") is a historical chronicle of early India, written in Sanskrit verse by Kalhana (a Kashmiri Pandit) in 1148-1149 CE. It covers the entire span of history in Kashmir from the earliest times to the date of its composition and is considered to be the best and most authentic work of its kind.
6. Keys to Kashmir, (Gandhi Memorial College, LalaRookh Publications, Srinagar, 1957). p. 40
7. Keys to Kashmir, (Gandhi Memorial College, Lala Rookh Publicaions, Srinagar, 1957). P.43.
8. Ibid.
9. Plateau like formation (locally called wudar) are mostly found to the west of River Jhelum and are protruding towards the east. These are flat-topped, with height rising to 366 meters from the surrounding ground level, with sides slopping and separated from each other by ravines.
10. Sir Marc Auriel Stein was a Hungarian Jew, born at Budapest on November 26, 1862. He was baptised as a Christian by his parents and later took British citizenship. He was an archaeologist, primarily known for his explorations and archaeological discoveries in Central Asia. He was knighted for his discovery of rare Buddhist manuscripts at Magao caves near Danhuang in China in 1907. Whenever he returned from his tiring expeditions to Central Asia, he made a tent in Gulmarg as his home, where he would stay all alone, except for his dog, called Dash. He was also a Professor at some Indian university. He died in Kabul on October 26, 1943 and is buried there.
11. Keys to Kashmir, (Gandhi Memorial College, Lala Rookh Publications, Srinagar, 1957). p. 46.
12. Avantivarman (855-883 CE) brought back normalcy and restored stability to the chaotic conditions prevailing in Kashmir at the time. He carried out great engineering works through his chief engineer, Suyya, reclaiming large tracts of land from Wullar Lake, by redirecting the course of Vitasta River(later renamed Jhelum). Many villages were created on this reclaimed land, chief among them being Suyapur, present day Sopore. He put into place numerous anti-flood measures and dug out many canals that increased food production.
13. Kashmir: Its Aborigines and their Exodus, Lancer Publishers and Distributers, New Delhi.
    Hasan, History of Kashmir.
    Hasan, whose actual name was Pir Ghulam Hasan Khuihami (Khuihami, because he belonged to Khuihom—Khuihom is a combination of Sanskrit words, Khrish+Ashrama, which is present-day Bandipore). Hasan wrote Tarikh-i-Kashmir in Farsi in three volumes in circa 1889. After being edited by Moulvi Ibrahim of Khanyar, Srinagar, it was published by Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy in Farsi in three volumes. The book, whose Volume II is political history and is considered most authentic, has not been translated into Urdu or English.
14. Kalhana in his Rajtarangini narrates a story about King Lalitaditya. While exercising his horse, the King noticed two beautiful girls dancing and singing at the same spot every day. On further query he was informed by the girls that they did so on the instructions of their mother. The king had the spot dug in and found the remnants of two decayed temples with two doors, with the images of Rama and Lakshmana inside these. He got a new temple constructed at the spot. This clearly established that the tradition of temple dancing existed in the ancient times. In fact, the Indian classical dance in various forms originated from this tradition of dancing before the temple deities.
15. Keys to Kashmir, (Gandhi Memorial College, LalaRookh Publications, Srinagar, 1957). p. 44.

Martand

The temple is 60 feet long and 38 feet wide, its height, when complete must have been 75 feet. The courtyard that surrounds and encloses the temple, is a more remarkable object than the temple itself

Martand Sun Temple, By Mike Prince from Bangalore, CC BY 2.0 (Wikimedia Commons)

Martand, the most impressive and grandest of all the ancient temples, occupies undoubtedly the finest location in Kashmir. This noble ruin is the most striking in size and position of all the existing remains. The temple itself is not more than 40 feet high, but its solid walls and bold outlines, towering over the fluted pillars of the surrounding Colonnade, give it an imposing appearance. There are no petty confused details, but all are distinct and massive and most admirably suited to the general character of the building. The mass of buildings consist of one lofty central edifice with a small detached wing on each side of the entrance, the whole standing in a large quadrangle, surrounded by a Colonnade of fluted pillars with intervening trefoil headed recesses. The length of the outer side of the wall which is blank, is about 90 yards that of the front is about 60 yards. There are in all 84 columns, a singularly appropriate number in a temple of the Sun, if, as is supposed, the number is accounted sacred by the Hindus in consequence of its being the product of the number of days in the week and the number of signs in the Zodiac.

The remains of three gateways opening into the court are now standing. The principal of these fronts due west towards Anantnag. It is also rectangular in shape and built with enormous blocks of limestone, six or eight feet in length and one of nine feet and of proportionate solidity, cemented with mortar. It is surprising how these huge stones were piled one upon the other to a great height with such exactitude. The central building is the most imposing structure and above all has (as the temples in Kashmir possess) in addition to the cella or sanctuary, a nave 18 feet square. The sanctuary alone is left entirely bare, the two other compartments being lined with rich panellings and sculptured niches. It has been conjectured that the roof was of pyramidal form and that the entrance chamber and wings were similarly carved. There would thus have been four distinct pyramids of which that over the inner chamber must have been the loftiest, the height of its pinnacle above the ground being about 75 feet.

The temple is 60 feet long and 38 feet wide. Its height, when complete must have been 75 feet. The courtyard that surrounds and encloses the temple, is a more remarkable object than the temple itself. Its internal dimensions are 220 by 142 feet. On each face is a central cella, larger and higher than the colonnade in which it is placed. The height is 30 feet and the pillars on each side are nine feet high – not lofty but they have a Grecian aspect which is interesting. It is thought that the whole of the interior of the quadrangle was originally filled with water to a level up to one foot of the base of the columns and that access to the temple was gained by a raised pathway of slabs supported on solid blocks at short intervals which connected the gateway flight of steps with that leading to the temple. The same kind of pathway stretched right across the quadrangle from one side doorway to the other. A constant supply of fresh water was kept up through a canal from the river Lidar, which was conducted along the side of the mountain for the service of the village close by.

In the centre of either side of the longer interior chamber is a window reaching the floor and about eight feet in height. The walls thus divided quarterly are filled with single figures in relief, two of Surya and two of Lakshmi, one on each panel.

Bates says that the interior must have been as imposing as the exterior. On ascending the flight of steps now covered by the ruins, the votary of the Sun entered a highly decorated chamber with a doorway on each side covered by a pediment with a trefoil-headed niche containing a bust of the Hindu triad, and on the flanks of the main entrance as well as those of the side doorways were trefoil niches, each of which held a deity. The interior decorations of the roof can only be conjecturally determined, as there do not appear to be any ornamented stones that could, with certainty, be assigned to it.

Cunnigham thinks that the erection of this Sun temple was suggested by the magnificent sunny prospect which its position commands. He remarks, "It overlooks the finest view in Kashmir, and perhaps in the known world. Beneath it lies the 'Paradise of the East', with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no pretty peer in a half-mile glen, but the full display of a valley 30 miles in breadth and 84 miles in length, the whole of which lies beneath the ken of the wonderful Marthand." ■

-Extract from *A History of Kashmir* by PNK Bamzai

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I, Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Kashmir and Himalayan regions

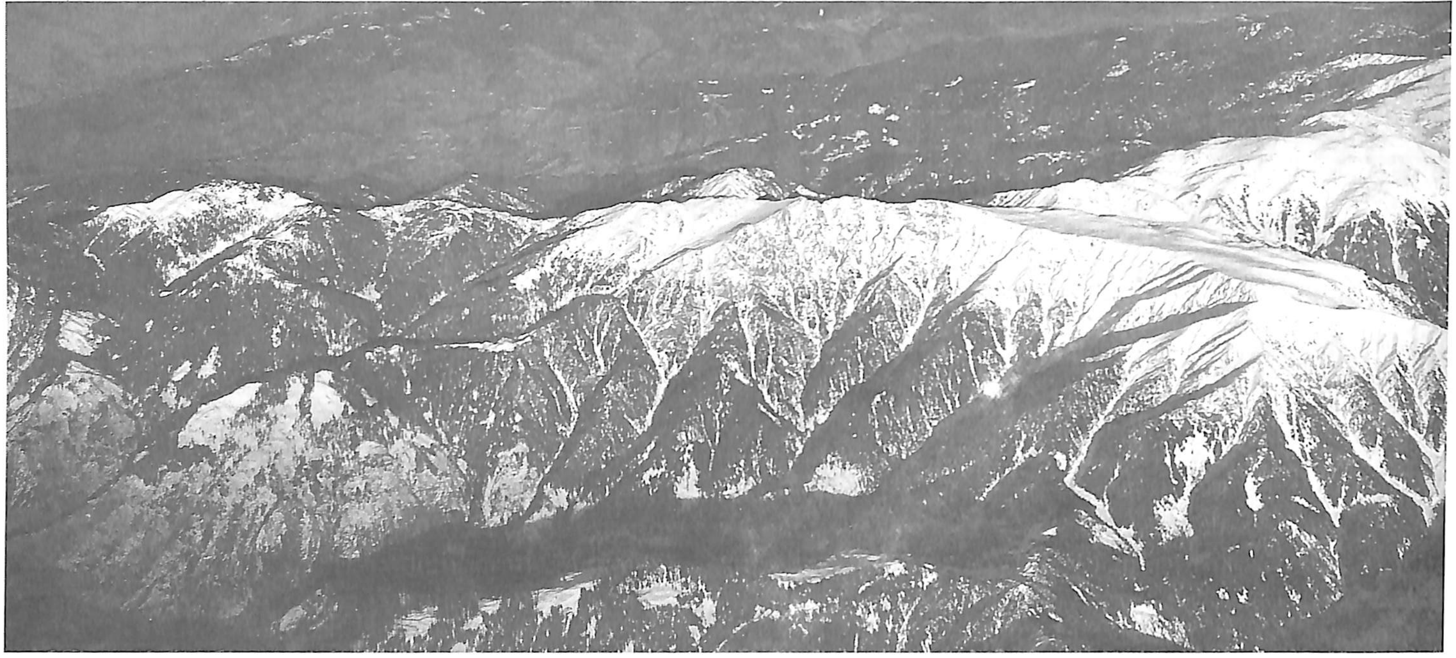
Dr Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani

The case for viewing Kashmir in the perspective of Himalayan culture is indeed very strong. Unfortunately, this remains a totally neglected research area

Stretching from the Hindukush in the west to Myanmar in the east, the Himalayas are not a mere geo-physical phenomenon but the symbol of Indian civilisational ethos, the very soul and essence of India's spiritual and cultural traditions. The serene beauty of their eternal snows evokes a vision of the infinite and inspires a quest for the unknown. Their heights are the heights of the mind, their cosmic silence offering sublime moments of contemplation on the deeper and intrinsic meanings of life. It is in the caves and caverns of the Himalayas and on the serene shores of the rivers and lakes, having their sources in the mountain range or on its lofty peaks high as the strivings and aspirations of man that sages and seers have meditated to discover the deep mysteries of life and death-eternal truths that illuminate the mind with the immensity of the cosmic vision of the oneness of man, nature and the divine in the infinity of time. In the lap of this vast and scintillating mountain range were born the "human and humane" value systems that stress the sanctity of life and of nature and have moulded and shaped the Indian psyche since time immemorial. Perhaps that is why Kalidasa called Himalayas the very embodiment of divinity, measuring rod of the oceanic depths of India's consciousness.

Indeed, it is impossible to imagine India without this great mountain system which generates the creative rhythm and harmony that marks the lifestyle of the Indian people. That surely must be the reason why the great Shankaracharya chose to establish here the seats of the four Jagat Gurus in the places of pilgrimage as symbolic pillars of the directions supporting the spiritual unity of India. These bounding pillars are enclosed by the halo of what the ancient texts called Kashmir Mandala, completing the circle of a sacred geography towards which even today pilgrims from all directions walk.

The vast Himalayan amphitheatre has witnessed a great drama of movement, migration and mixing of people in the early dawns of pre-history, leading to long process of acculturation through which diverse ethnic groups evolved into distinct communities with their own peculiarities and characteristics and yet having many elements of commonality. Different cultural patterns and ways of living of the Himalayan communities emerged over the centuries from the peculiarly fascinating eco and geo-systems of the region, which at the same time displayed interesting strains of uniformity. Occupying a central place in this fascinating world of Himalayan culture, Kashmir has contributed immensely towards developing its unique traditions. The value



Aerial view of snow-clad mountains of Kashmir. The sun is clear, winter is nearing to end, and the snow is melting. Author: Iqaan (Wikimedia Commons)

systems, beliefs, rituals as well as art, architecture, folklore etc. shared by the people who inhabit in it reflect a deep colouring of elements whose origins can be traced to Kashmir. As it is well known, it came to be universally recognised as a centre of learning and culture, playing a crucial role, quite incommensurate with its geographical area, in creating the cultural climate in which Indian consciousness achieved its full efflorescence.

Historical factors and geographical location were largely responsible for promoting cross-regional exchanges and social interactions between Kashmir and other places situated along the Himalayas, which in turn led to its forging of highly significant linkages at different planes. For centuries this process went on, sometimes continuous and sometimes interrupted, sometimes intense and sometimes feeble, with far-reaching ramifications for art and culture, besides trade and commerce, in areas within the Indian watershed as well as across the Himalayas. Historical accounts are replete with references to political relations between Kashmir and ancient Gandhara, Kabul valley, Taxila and Swat in the north-west and also the erstwhile "hill states" of Panjab like Kangra, Chamba and Kullu – now known as Himachal Pradesh – not to speak of the hilly districts to the south of the valley like Kashtwar, Bhadrawah, Poonch and Rajouri in the Middle Himalayas which are now a part of the Jammu & Kashmir state.

The fact is that the territories immediately adjoining the Kashmir Valley and located across the Peer Panchal range have played very important, sometimes even crucial role in its political and cultural history. These include Kashtwar, Bhadrawah, Poonch, Rajouri, Ballawar etc., references to which are replete in the chronicles of the Jammu & Kashmir state. Of these Kashtwar has remained practically the very backyard of the valley, providing as it has done, refuge on several occasions to its kings fleeing from political upheavals caused by attacks of ferocious invaders from outside. But more importantly it provides the key to many unkown or forgotten facts of Kashmir's cultural past. Kashtwari, the only recognised dialect of the Kashmiri language, holds many a secret of its origin and development. Bhadrawah, known as "Little Kashmir" for its close resemblance to the landscape and climate of Kashmir, is also linked to it for several folk-religious beliefs and practices though politically it has been tributary to Chamba. Poonch has also been very closely linked with the Vitasta Valley, though more on the plane of political history. The same can be said about Rajouri. Sadly, however, no serious attempts have been made to study what constituted the cultural network that binds these areas in an intimate relationship.

Ancient chroniclers often refer to the intimate political and cultural links that existed between Kashmir and the erstwhile states of Kangra, Chamba and Kullu which have at one point of time or the other in history been tributary to Kashmir, the latter at times wielding even direct political authority over them, with matrimonial relations often helping to reinforce the ties. While no direct historical records of Kashmir's relations with what now comprises the Uttarakhand state are available, bahis maintained by the Pandas of Hardwar of their Kashmiri clients visiting them for obsequies of their deceased kin, provide a very interesting material for study including the names of several important historical personages. Some of the bahis have images of the river Vitasta drawn on their dog-eared and fragile pages, personified as a goddess and shown mounted on a fish in accordance with the Kashmiri tradition. The Nilamata Purana, which gives the story of the emergence of the Kashmir Valley from the waters of the primordial Satisar lake, states that Kashyap Rishi who drained away the water of the lake, was at Kankhal near Hardwar on a pilgrimage at the time people approached him with the request to deliver them from the devastation caused by the demon Jalodbhava.

As can be gleaned from the Nilamata, Rajatarangini and other ancient texts, affinities between Kashmir and other Himalayan regions begin with ethnography itself with the prehistoric racial groups like the Aryans, Nagas, Pishachas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Dardas, Khashas, Kiratas or the people of the Tibetian-Burmese ethnicity. who occupied ancient Kashmir being the very people who were spread along the entire Himalayan belt on the Indian side. While the historical identity of Nagas who along with Pishachas are said to have been the original inhabitants of Kashmir, ancients Sanskrit texts like the Mahabharata and the other Puranas are replete with references to them and so are the Buddhist Jatakas. These references indicate that they were actual people, and not mere mythical beings as some scholars take them to be. They wielded tremendous influence not only in north western India but almost in every part of the country down to Andhra Pradesh in the south. But it is not clear whether with all their influence they ruled over any region or not, or whether they belonged to a racial group other than antagonistic to the Aryans. Were they a people without any alphabetic culture despite their civilisational progress for no language or literature has been attributed to them, or were they an Aryan tribe itself often at odds with the dominant group but at times having cordial relations with it? As for the Pishachas, Prakrit grammarians have referred to various varieties of the Paishachi Prakrit language and given some broad outlines of its peculiarities, but no work in Paishachi Prakrit has so far been traced, the much referred to Brihat Katha of Gunadhya having been lost forever according to the legend. The area in which various Paishachi dialects are said to have been spoken practically covers the whole of India, which is highly improbable. The Pishachas are also associated with cannibalism and forcible marriage practices which include elopement. Scholars like Morgiensterne and Grierson consider them to have been speakers of the Pashai language of Kafiristan. The Pishachas have been shown in the Nilamata as a highly violent and uncivilised tribe with the Nagas severely dreading the prospect of living in co-habitation with them in prehistoric Kashmir as the sage Kashyap had told them to. However, in Sanskrit texts like the Nilamata we see these ethnic groups mixing and mingling with each other with the passage of time to live in peace and harmony.

In the Kashmiri language the very word 'nag' denotes springs and waterholes as the aborigine Nagas were regarded as their presiding deities. In Himachal Pradesh too, there are several springs with serpent deities besides numerous worship places associated with them. In Uttarakhand the names of temples and place names also regarded as sacred to them are legion. Same is the case with place names associated with the Yakshas, who are called Jakhs in the Uttarakhand region and worshiped as divinities.

The Yakshas, immortalised by Kalidasa in his Meghadoot, constitute another dominant ethnic community of pre-historic times who had to be propitiated by the people of ancient

In the Kashmiri language the very word 'nag' denotes springs and waterholes as the aborigine Nagas were regarded as their presiding deities

Kashmir to keep them at bay, the ritual of offering gadabatta or fish and rice to them on the Khetsimavas day being a relic of such propitiatory traditions. Ananda Coomaraswamy regards Yakshas to be water or tree spirits as they are invariably associated with waterholes and trees. From their description in the Mahabharata and other ancient texts, the Kiratas do not seem to have belonged to an indigenous ethnic group but having possessed Mongolian features. These pre-historic cohabitants of the Himalayan eco-habitats faded into historical oblivion only after weaving strands of their beliefs and ways of lifeinto the fascinating fabric that can be broadly described as Himalayan culture.

It was natural for Kashmiris to have exerted a great influence on cultural as well as artistic plane on its neighbouring areas, more particularly those located along the Himalayan watershed. We find features of Kashmiri temple architecture and sculptural art marked by trifoliate arches, three-tiered roofs and triangular pediments crossed the geographic boundaries of the Valley and found their way into Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. As is well known, Lotsava Rinchenbzangpo (950-1005 CE) took with himself 32 Kashmiri painters and craftsmen to Western Tibet to construct monasteries and paint murals on their walls at the behest of King Ye-shes-od of Guge. The amazing beauty of 10th -11th century Kashmiri style of pictorial art can be witnessed not only at Mangnang, Tholing and Tsaparang in the trans-Himalayan belt but also in places like Alchi in Ladakh and Tabo (Spiti) in Himachal Pradesh. Noted art historian Pratapaditya Pal regards the murals of Alchi no less important than the frescoes of Ajanta in the history of Indian art. Kashmiri artistic traditions were also carried into the Himalayan regions in the shape of bronze images and scroll paintings. Perched on the Karakorum heights in the north-eastern Himalayas, Ladakh had always been in close contact with the Kashmir Valley, because of the affinities provided by the Buddhist links. Kashmir's crucial role in the dissemination of Buddhism to Tibet, Central Asia, China and other countries in the Trans-Himalayan region right from the time of Ashoka and Kanishka is well known and well documented. Ladakh too, occupying the same geographical locus, could not but be a part of this vast communication network based on political, religious, cultural and commercial considerations, particularly from early medieval times to at least the 16th century.

A subsequent development took place in 18th - 19th century when the fear of religious persecution and lure of greener pastures drove Kashmiri painters to places like Kangra, Chamba, Basohli and Guler. It was the artistic genius of master painters from Kashmir like Seu Raina, Nainsukh, Chajju Bhagat and others which gave birth to the classic Pahari School of miniature painting famous for its subtlety, artistic excellence and appeal. Even at the folk level the scroll paintings - quite like the Kashmiri goratray - can be seen in several places in Himachal Pradesh.

Sharada, one of the most important ancient scripts of India, which evolved in Kashmir probably earlier than the 8th-9th century remained in use as a medium of written communication in the north-western parts of the country for a long period. It is also the mother of many other scripts like Takari and Gurumukhi. According to Chosbyun of Bu-ston, Tibetan scholar Thonmi Sambhot was sent by King Srong-bcansgam-po to Kashmir in the 7th century to learn grammar and devise a script for the Tibetan language and Thonmi returned with a 31 letter alphabet based on Nagari and Sharada characters. Whether the Tibetan alphabet is derived from it in Thonmi's time or later, the Sharada script has been yet another important unifying element in the Himalayan cultural and civilisational history.

Shiva and his consort Parvati, besides the Buddha, have been the most beloved deities of the Himalayan people. In fact, the benign presence of Shiva, whose abode is said to be on Kailasa on the Himalayan heights, together with his various manifestations, is all-pervading in the region which is also the source of some of the holiest of Indian rivers, including the Ganga which is believed to flow from his matted locks. In Kashmir, where the Ganga does not flow

Sharada, one of the most important ancient scripts of India, remained in use as a medium of written communication in the north-western parts of the country for a long period

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Environment,
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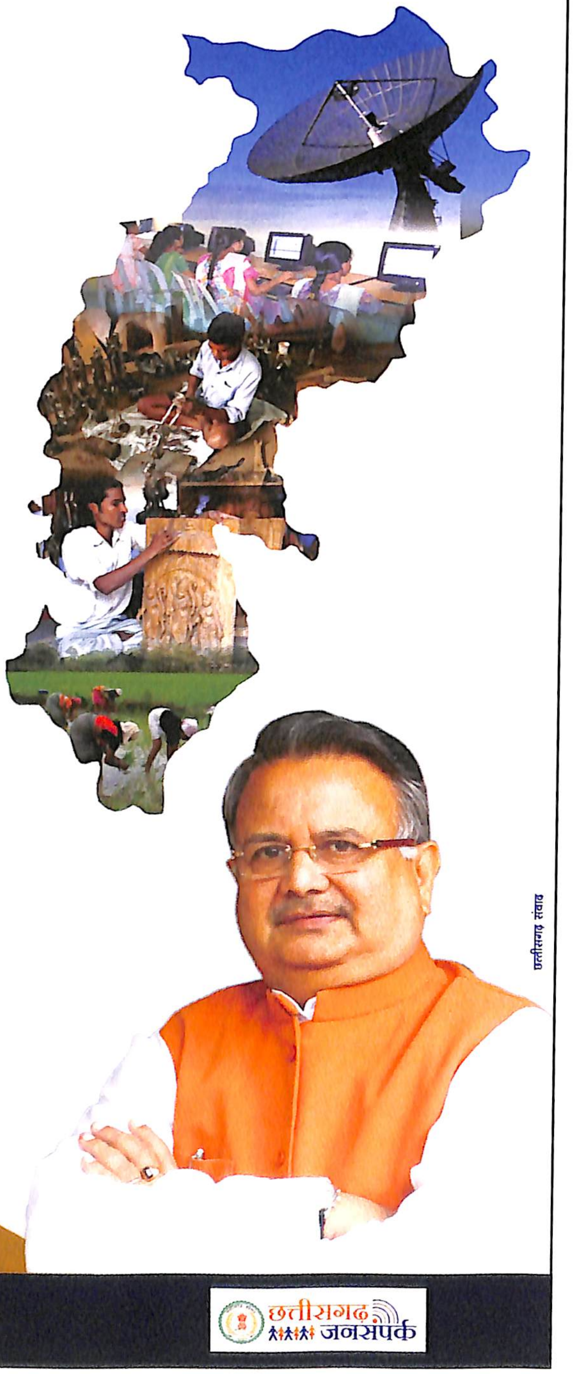
देश में अव्वल
छत्तीसगढ़

- राज्य के गरीबों को भोजन का कानूनी अधिकार देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- किसानों को शून्य प्रतिशत ब्याज पर ऋण उपलब्ध कराने वाला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- राज्य के युवाओं को कौशल उन्नयन के प्रशिक्षण का कानूनी अधिकार देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- आईटी रोड मैप बनाने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- वर्ष 2008 से घरों, कारखानों और खेती, किसानी के लिए चौबीसों घंटे बिजली देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- सभी नागरिकों को निःशुल्क स्वास्थ्य बीमा देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- युवाओं को निःशुल्क लैपटाप, टेबलेट देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- बालिकाओं को स्नातक स्तर तक निःशुल्क शिक्षा देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक के प्रतिवेदन वर्ष 2016 के अनुसार विकास मूलक एवं सामाजिक क्षेत्र पर सर्वाधिक राशि व्यय करने वाला देश का पहला राज्य छत्तीसगढ़।
- अनुसूचित जनजाति और परम्परागत वन वासियों को वन अधिकार पत्र वितरण में छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य देश में अव्वल।
- बेहतर कृषि उत्पादन के लिए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा चार बार कृषि कर्मण पुरस्कार से सम्मानित होने वाला राज्य।
- छत्तीसगढ़ देश के उन चुनिन्दा राज्यों में शामिल है, जिन्होंने नवाचार और उद्यमिता नीति बनाई है (सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी समर्थित सेवा नीति 2014 से 2019)



सबका साथ - सबका विकास

छत्तीसगढ़ जनसंपर्क

Linguists have drawn attention to the importance of studying Kashmiri for understanding the evolution of modern Indian languages from their Old Indo-Aryan origins

there are several holy rivers from Doodhganga to Kishenganga carrying its name. Every inch of the mountain ranges from west to east, from Kailas to Amarnath is sacred to Shiva, abounding in places of pilgrimage reflecting his glory, with numerous peaks and crags, caves and caverns, rocks and cliffs resounding with legends associated with him.

The same is case with Parvati, who is the great mountain's own daughter. The Nilamata Purana, a sixth century Sanskrit text, which narrates Kashmir's, creation, describes the whole Valley as her very embodiment. Lake after lake, pond after pond, stream after stream, forest grove after forest grove, rock after rock, and peak after peak tells the poignant story of her love for the land. Parvati is said to have incarnated herself as the river Vitasta - the beloved river of the Kashmiris - whose birthday they celebrated, till not too distant a past, by floating earthern lamps on its gentle waves. On the grassy slopes of the beautiful meadow Yusmarg, she is said to have roamed as yoshita or a young girl, lending her name to the place. At the level of folk religion, many hilly Goddesses, like Sharika and Ragnya in Kashmir and Nanda Devi and numerous other local Goddesses in other parts of the region, have been identified with her. At a higher mystic and esoteric plane, this has led to proliferation of cults associated with Shaiva and Shakta and Buddhist Tantrism (of the Mahayana, Mantrayana and Vajrayana variety). Tantra then has been the abiding belief system deeply entrenched in the entire region from Kashmir down to Kamarup, the devotional and ritualistic constant of the faith that receives its values from Kashmir Shaiva metaphysics or doctrines of Mahayana. The immense popularity of the Bhairava or mother Goddess cults at the level of folk religious beliefs and practices show how strong these traditions have been and still are.

Language is yet another field that opens a whole horizon of affinities between the languages of the Himalayan regions evolved from and pulsating with the beauty and vitality of Sanskrit, the embodiment of Indian thought and culture. Linguists have drawn attention to the importance of studying Kashmiri for understanding the evolution of modern Indian languages from their Old Indo-Aryan origins over the centuries as well as their present relations. The dynamics of creating vocabularies that the Himalayan Languages share as a legacy from Sanskrit is revealed not only by the word-stock that they draw upon, but also by the structural matrix explaining their formative processes. The secret of affinities between these languages in their present form lie in their connection with Sanskrit that have given them their shape from their etymologies to their morphologies. The chh-based auxiliary verb forms of Kashmiri, for instance, derived from the Sanskrit root kshi, are quite like the corresponding auxiliary verb forms in Kumanoni and other Uttarakhand dialects. The similarities of which a whole world opens in lexicographical items as well as their "semantic spectra" to borrow a phrase from Dr Lokesh Chandra, could make a very interesting study, even though Sanskrit is in near total eclipse in today's Kashmir.

Architecture and artistic skills have a wide impact on the lifestyles of large segments of population in these areas. Close resemblance between the traditional residential architecture of Kashmir with its carved wooden bay windows and eaves, columns and beams, doors and latticed window panes and the traditional houses in different parts of Himachal Pradesh is something that cannot be missed by the discerning eye.

The case for viewing Kashmir in the perspective of Himalayan culture is indeed very strong. Unfortunately, this remains a totally neglected research area even though venturing into it can lead us to amazing facts about Kashmir's indigenous belief systems, religious expressions, life-patterns and ritualistic behaviour, philosophy, traditional arts and artistic skills, language and literary traditions, folklore, folk-religious beliefs and practices including demonology and animistic and pantheistic worship, oral and intangible heritage, eco-cultural systems and social structure. ■

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(Courtesy: Praznath, Jan-Mar 2011 Issue)

Prof. Kashinath Pandit

Kashmir: A Twisted Saga in History

The story of first footsteps of Muhammadan people in Kashmir cannot be recounted with certitude. Some writers think that *Chachnameh*, the history of conquest of Sindh by the Arabs in A.D. 712, has reference to the presence of some Muhammadans in Kashmir. But this is refuted on various counts. The original Arabic text (if there was one) of the work is not available, and what survived was its Farsi version made in around second half of 13th century. Subsequently, numerous versions of Farsi text appeared but authenticity of their contents remained a moot point. Besides this, the more authentic and much credited Arabic work on early conquests of Arabs, namely *Futuhu'l Buldan*[1] by Baladhuri does not make any mention of Muslim presence in Kashmir in 8th century, the period with which *Chahnameh* deals.[2]

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. A.D. 1048), the celebrated Khwarazmian (Central Asia) scholar and polymath, accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni in his A.D 1017 Indian campaign. His valuable account of Indian civilizational fund with reference to Kashmiri scholarship, particularly in astronomical science in the celebrated *Tahqiq-i Mal'il Hind* (written in A.D. 1030)[3] does not contain any hint that the people of Muhammadan faith were to be found in Kashmir.

However, describing the details of the aftermath of Mahmud's victory over Tralochanpala in or around A.D. 1018, Stein writes, "The detailed account that *Tarikh-i-Yamini*[4] gives of the decisive battle agrees in some particulars regarding the position occupied by the occupying forces to Kalhana's description. Mahmud won a victory in a valley which leads from the region from Jhelum towards Kashmir. Some local chieftains are said to have made submission to the Sultan (Mahmud) in consequence of the victory. Also, the forcible conversion of Kashmiris to Islam is mentioned."[5]

Keeping in mind the considerable accuracy and authenticity of Kalhana's statement, particularly when he was not physically too distant in time from the event, we find that this was the first attempt of forcible conversion of Kashmiris to Muhammadan faith by the victorious troops of a foreign Muslim invader. It also explodes the myth propagated by biased commentators of mediaeval India that Mahmud of Ghazni was only a rapacious looter of wealth of Hindu temples and that he did not bring about forcible conversion of Hindus to Islamic faith.

The word *Hammira* (Hamira)[6] occurs in *Rajatarangini*[7] for the first time when King Sangramaraja (A.D 1003 – 1028) deputed his Commander Tunga[8] with a military force for the assistance of Trilochanpala, the commander of the army of Kabul Shahi kings. The latter had blood

Some local chieftains are said to have made submission to the Sultan (Mahmud) in consequence of the victory. Also, the forcible conversion of Kashmiris to Islam is mentioned

Laying of flowers at Sharda Temple in POK in November 2016, Save Sharda Committee Kashmir, Pic: Ravinder Pandita

relations with Kashmiri royalty and were fighting Mahmud. The *Hammira of Rajatarangini* - the Amir of Arabic origin - is the part of Mahmud's title viz. *Amiru'l Momineen* or the Commander of the Faithful.

Briefing Tunga on the tactics of fighting the troops of Mahmud, Trilochanpala, the Commander of the Shahi troops advises him as this; "Until you have become acquainted with the *Turushka* warfare, you should post yourself on the scarp of this hill. Then he crossed thence rather with a small force to the other bank of Taushi and defeated a corps which *Hammira* had sent on reconnaissance." (verse 53).

Two words in this paragraph are significant; *Turushka* and *Taushi*. Kalhana used Turushka at many places, distinguishing them from Kashmiris, Bhautia, Darads, Tibetans and other ethnic groups. The exact seat of the *Turushkas* could not be identified in the *Rajatarangini*.

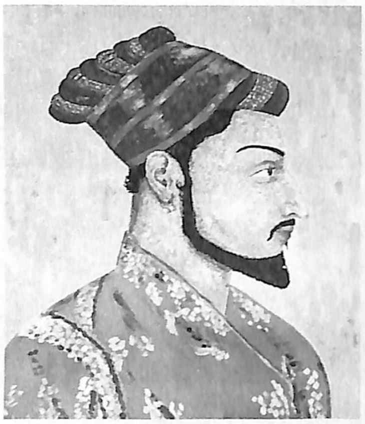
However, in an indirect reference Kalhan Pandit, while writing about Lalliya Shahi in the chapter on King Shankaravarman of Kashmir (A.D 883-902) the founder of the Hindu Shahi kingdom of Waihind, says, "Alakhana's support, the illustrious Lalliya Shahi – who, (placed) between the rulers of *Darads* and *Turushkas* as between a lion and a boar, resembled *Aryavarta* (as it lies) between the Himalaya and the Vindhya Mountains[9].

Presuming the valleys in the declines of western Karakoram were the dwelling sites of Darads, it follows that *Turushka* concentration was around the sandy tracts of western Turkistan. 'Tagin' the suffix to the names like Sabuk-tagin and Alap-tagin – the ancestors of Mahmud of Ghazni - refers to a tribe of the *Turushkas* of this region. This clarifies Kalhan Pandit's statement that *Turushkas* formed a strong corps of Mahmud's army, and it was a contingent of this ethnic group that had come to Kashmir after the defeat of Tunga.

The word *Turushka* prominently preceding the above cited two verses of the *Rajatarangini* refers to an ethnic group of people in Central Asia. In the *Shahnameh*, the great Iranian epic, Ferdowsi speaks of two peoples, namely Tur and

Iranian and Arab historians have often spoken of two regions namely Iran and Turan defining Iran as the land of the people over whom Iraj ruled and Turan the land of the people over whom Tur ruled

Dara Shikoh & Kashmir



Dara Shikoh is the eldest son and the heir apparent of Shah Jahan was Indianised in true sense in the entire Mughul Dynasty. He not only studied Vedas & Upanishads but also studied Astrology & Astronomy. His great contribution was that he translated Upanishads from Sanskrit to Persian so that these could be studied by Muslim scholars. He also studied Buddhism (Tripitak).

He was a regular visitor to Kashmir and was fascinated by its beauty and ancient wisdom. He read Rajtarangini with deep interest. Dara Shikoh constructed the famous Pari Mahal (Angels Abode) at Srinagar near Chasma Shahi in honour of his Sufi tutor Mullah Shah Badakhshi. The structure is situated in a seven terraced garden atop Zabarwan hills overlooking Srinagar. The Pari Mahal was built by Dara Shikoh in the mid-1600s. It served as a library and an abode for him. Dara Shikoh was said to have lived in this area in the years 1640, 1645, and 1654. It was further used as an observatory, useful for teaching astrology and astronomy. The library had a rich collection of books on Indian wisdom, Astrology, Astronomy, Islam etc. Dara Shikoh also constructed Mulla Akhoon (Islamic scholar & mystic) mosque in Kashmir and Dara Shikoh Garden at Bijbehara.

- Manthan Desk

Tajik as original inhabitants of “the lands beyond Oxus” (*vara rud*). Iranian and Arab historians have often spoken of two regions namely Iran and Turan defining Iran as the land of the people over whom Iraj ruled and Turan the land of the people over whom Tur ruled. Tur, Salam and Iraj are the three sons of legendary Iranian Emperor Feridun who, as the legend goes, had distributed his empire among his three sons during his life time.

Research conducted by eminent scholars like Barthold, Litvinsky and others have established that the people of northern and eastern Central Asia (Tur's domain) were of Turko-Mongoloid stock and called Turks while those in the south (Iraj's domain) through which River Oxus (Amu) flowed was inhabited by the Tajiks who like Iranians are of Aryan stock. These people spoke Tajik which is akin to Farsi, the language of Iranians. The people of Tur's lands spoke Turkic from which the name Turkistan is derived. The people of this land came to be called Turk. Stein is convinced that the word *Turushka* is the Sanskritized form of the word Turk.

In the *Rajatarangini*, *Turushka* occurs for the first time in Book IV (verse 170) which runs as this: “Clearly it is by his command to display the mark of their bondage, that the *Turushkas* carry their arms at their back and shave half their head.” This verse is about King Lalitaditya Muktapida's (A.D. 700 – 736) campaign (*digvijaya*) in the northern region meaning Central Asia.

Stein adds a very **curious** footnote to this verse which merits a mention in full. He writes, “Wilson quotes (page 49) a similar legend from *Harivansha* which relates how the various tribes of *Mlechhas*[10] were forced by King Sagara to dress their hair in different distinguishing fashions. The observations underlying Kalhana's story still hold good. Yarkandis[11] and Tibetans are fond of walking with their hands folded at their back and can often be seen in this attitude in the bazaars of Srinagar.[12] Among Kashmiris, whether Brahmans or Muhammadans, this habit is very unusual.”

It appears that the social structure that had endured over many centuries in Kashmir met

Historians have often noted there is an information deficit in the history of Kashmir between the 11th and 13th century, a period of great turbulence and turmoil

with drastic change after the defeat of Tunga, the Kashmiri Prime Minister and Commander, who had been deputed to support Trilochanpala, the Commander of Kabul Shahi forces somewhere around the present town of Jhelum in Punjab, which is also the confluence of the Vitasta (Jhelum) and Chandrabhaga (Chenab) Rivers. This was during the reign of King Kalasha (A.D 1063-1089). We gather that after that disastrous defeat, the troops of Mahmud comprising mostly Turks, fanned out in the region north and north east of Jhelum town. It was in this period that *Turushkas* made deep; inroads into Kashmir not only in physical terms but in political, and subsequently, social and cultural terms also.

Historians have often noted there is an information deficit in the history of Kashmir between the 11th and 13th century, a period of great turbulence and turmoil. There is need to revisit the transitional period of Kashmir history from one civilizational ethos to another which stands diametrically at the opposite end. The process of conversion from other faiths, especially of the idol-worshipping people (*butparast*) to Muhammadan faith seems to have caught the imagination of invading legions of Mahmud who chiefly comprised the Turks. Note this remark of Kalhan Pandit: "Then Tunga, after having, by his defeat, brought about the descent of the *Turushkas* on the whole surface of earth marched back slowly to his own country."[13]

The phrase "to his own country" probably means his native land of present Rajouri-Poonch zone and not Kashmir valley because he met with humiliation and opposition after this defeat. Therefore, the interpretation of Kalhana's term "the whole surface of earth" should mean the entire valley of Kashmir and its adjoining hilly areas.

The assertion that *Turukshkas* made deep inroads into the politics of Hindu Kingdom of Kashmir at this point of time is borne out by another verse of *Rajatarangini*. Rebuking King Kalasha (A.D 1063-1089) for his promiscuity, Kalhan writes: "Though the King had reached a mature age, he did not get rid of his vice and the evil habits which the wretched foreigners had taught him. The Takka[14] [called] Vulliya bought from *Turushkas* girls born in various distant regions and brought them to him (Kalasha).

This means that the top administrative echelons of the royal court of Kashmir had fallen prey to carnal desire and the *Turushkas* exploited this weakness to push their political agenda by selling to them the girls in their captivity. This practice was unknown to Kashmiris, and, as Kalhan Pandit observes,

Miracle of Shree Bhat

Zain-ul-Abidin, the Budshah was the eighth sultan of Kashmir. He was known by his subjects, and indeed still is, as Bud Shah (the Great King).

The first 35 years of his reign are described by Jonaraja in the Rajatarangini Dvitiya, while the subsequent years are described by Jonaraja's pupil, Srivara, in the Rajatarangini Tritiya. Both historians were contemporary of Budshah and both had administrative responsibility in his kingdom.

Zain-ul-Abidin earned a name for himself for his policy of religious toleration and public welfare activities. He abolished Jaziya on the Hindu majority of Kashmir. He extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit language and literature. He knew Persian, Sanskrit and Tibetan.

The Mahabharata and Kalhana's Rajatarangini were translated into Persian by his order. He was known for his religious tolerance. He called back the Hindus who left Kashmir during his father's reign. He allowed the Hindus to build temples and follow the personal law according to the Dharmashastras. He stopped the killing of cows. He re-introduced the grant of stipends to the learned Brahmans.

This change of mind and heart of Zain-ul-Abidin was because of Shree Bhat the famous physician (Ayurvedacharya) of his time. He treated Zain-ul-Abidin for his skin disease and in return he asked for compassion and religious tolerance in Kashmir.

- Manthan Desk

This practice was unknown to Kashmiris, and, as Kalhan Pandit observes, was brought to Kashmir by "the wretched Turushkas."

was brought to Kashmir by "the wretched *Turushkas*."[15]

The practice of corrupting local courtiers, warlords (Damara chieftains) and powerful personalities by prompting them to gratification of their carnal desire and bringing damsels to them became a recognized practice with the early foreign intruders. The author of Baharistan opens the chapter on Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Shahmir, the founder of first Muhammadan ruling house of Kashmir (A.D. 1339) as this:[16-17]

Image of the Liddar stream that flows into the Jhelum river. This image was taken in Pahalgam, Kashmir

"Sultan Shamsu'd Din was gifted with intelligence and sagacity and established cordial relations with all leading personalities and chiefs of the domain of Kashmir. He also entered matrimonial relations with them by giving his daughters in marriage to their sons. Thus, he established harmonious relations with the nobles and the leading personalities of Kashmir."

This is a rathe polite description of a far more manipulative technique for power play. The chieftains who were corrupted by Shahmir have been listed by Jonaraja.[18] They included the Damara chiefs of Shankarapora (Pattan), Bhangila (Bengil), Bhrnga (Breng)[19] and others.

We have evidence to show that towards late 11th and early 12th century, Kashmiri kings and covetous chieftains, having recognized military prowess and activism of the *Turushkas*, engaged them as mercenaries to strengthen their private fighting forces. Things came to a pass that in the words of Stein, "King Harsha's (A.D. 1089-1101) iconoclasm should be taken as an indication of his leaning towards Muhammadanism."[20]

This verse in *Rajatarangini* crystallizes the picture: "Wile continually sporting *Turushka* captains of hundreds[21] with money, this perverse minded king ate domesticated pigs until his death."[22] This suggests that each contingent of one hundred (Kashmiri) soldiers was captained by a Turk officer. Stein says it can scarcely be doubted that Kalhana is alluding here to Muhammadan troop-leaders in Harsha's service.

King Harsha died in A.D. 1101. The next two decades mostly witnessed much of military activity by Sussala in containing some of the defiant Damara chiefs. Sustained action kept him away from the city (of Srinagar) for a long time and his rival, Bhikshachara (A.D. 1120-21), who had raised the banner of revolt managed to enter the city with triumph and proclaim himself king.[23] However his kingship did not last beyond one year.

A glimpse of the internecine feuds and their fallout can be gleaned from the following verse: "Accompanied by Somapala, he (Bhikshachara) drew to himself for assistance, a force of *Turushkas*, the Sallara Vismaya having become an ally.[24]

Stein's footnote to the above referred verse in *Rajatarangini* now adds a new dimension to *Turushka* narrative. He writes: "The *Turushkas* here referred to are, of course, Muhammadans from the Punjab or the lower hills".

This means that by the year A.D. 1120-21, Muhammadans had established sway over the Punjab with easy access to Kashmir. In other words, we may say that about two centuries prior to the advent of Shamsu'd-Din Shahmir (A.D. 1339) political and military management of the Hindu Kingdom of Kashmir had opened to deep forays by the Muhammadans whether from Trans-Badakhshan region or from the planes of Punjab, all because of Mahmud's Indian campaigns.

The chieftains who were corrupted by Shahmir have been listed by Jonaraja. They included the Damara chiefs of Shankarapora (Pattan), Bhangila (Bengil), Bhrnga (Breng) and others

Therefore, one can say that early Muhammadans, in whatever guise - Sufis, missionaries, mendicants, musclemen etc.--- were not arriving in vacuum. Stein made a profound remark in this context. He says, "Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion, for which the influx of foreign adventurers both from the south and Central Asia had prepared the ground."[25]

Stein has made a very convincing analysis of the phenomenon of mass conversion to Islam at this point of time. He writes: "The conditions here indicated are illustrated by the frequent reference found in Jonaraja's and Shrivara's chronicles to Brahmans holding high official posts under the early Sultans."[26]

He continues, "The adoption of Islam by the population which became an accomplished fact during the latter half of the fourteenth century, but which probably began towards the close of the Hindu rule did neither affect the independence of the country nor at first materially change its political and cultural conditions. The administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans, for whom the change of religion presented no advantage and who accordingly, retained their inherited status, together with literary traditions."[27]

15th century Kashmiri historian Jonaraja, writing in the court of Shah Mir's descendant Budshah, states that Shah Mir came to Kashmir along with his tribe from the country of *Panchagahvara* (identified as the Panjgabbar valley between Rajouri and Budhal). He was said to belong to the family of an ancestor called *Partha*, who was described as a second Partha (an allusion to the Mahabharata hero Arjuna).[4][5] Some scholars state that the Panjgabbar valley was peopled by Khasas and so ascribe a Khasa ethnicity to Shah Mir.

Kashmirian civil society had slowly begun to lose cohesion right from the closing years of 11th century A.D. Decline and disintegration of satrapies, sultanates, khanates, kingdoms and empires all have gone through respective historical process.■

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...To be continued in second edition of Kashmir special

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4. Elliot and Dawson, vol. ii, p.87
5. Rajatarangini, tr. Stein, Book vii, fn. verses 47-69
6. See JRAS, ix, p. 190 seq
7. Bk. Vii, verse 53.
8. A khasha from Buddivasa identified with present Budil in Parnotsa (Proonts=Poonch).For fuller derail on Tunga see Rajatarangini, Note I, 105. Also see my A Muslim Missionary in Medieval Kashmir, p. 77, fn. 1.
9. Rajatarangini, Bk v, verse 152-53
10. Kalhana has used this word for people of non-Kashmiri stock and in the sense of impure. Aryans have generally distinguished between people of pure Aryan and impure non-Aryan blood. According to common usage among the Pandits of Kashmir, mleccha (abbreviated mel is used to identify Muhammadans of Kashmir. I
11. See The Most Important Finding of Niya in Taklamakan by Wang Binghua. This article was originally at China Culture, Vol. I, 2 April, 1996.
12. M.A Stein, the translator of Rajatarangini was in Srinagar around 1891.
13. See Bk VII, verse 70 along with fn. Rajatarangini
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15. Ibid, Bk vii, verse 520
16-17. Baharistan-i-Shahi: A Chronicle of Medieval Kashmir, tr. K.N. Pandit, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta, 1991, p.28.
18. Rajatarangini of Jonreaja, tr. J.C. Dutt, New Delhi, 1986, p. 77,
19. For more details about these place names and their chieftains see Rajat.v, 156n, vii, 499 and. Vol II, p4
20. Rajat. Bk VII, v 195fn
21. Ibid, vol. vii, pp f49 seq.
22. Rajat. Ibid fn 1149
23. Stein says that in all probability Sallara stands for the Farsi title Salar meaning commander. But he is unable to explain Vismaya. In any case the inference is that it was a brigade of Muhammadan troops commandeered by one named Vismaya (?) Maybe this word has suffered calligraphic distortion and could be actually Bimilla, very common Muhammadan name among people in Tukhara region in trans Badakhshan.
24. Ibid. Bk. Viii, verse 885.
25. Rajat. vil I, Introduction, ch. v p. 130
26. Rajat. Introdudction, vol. I, Chap v, fn 2
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Jawaharlal Kaul

Lalla, Nund Rishi and the Sufism

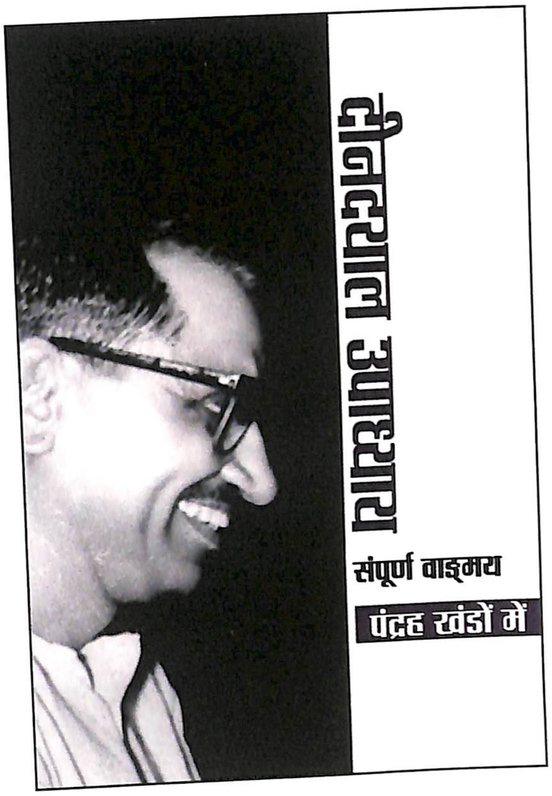
> Mystic poetry of Lalleshwari is fit example of this multidimensional popular religion of Kashmir just before Nund Rishi was born. Though Shaivite herself Lalla never hesitated to include Vedantic concept of Maya or a Buddhist principle in her verses

The integrating character of multidimensional philosophy of Abhinava gupta and Vedantic non-dualism of Shankara generated a unique form of Bhakti movement in Kashmir which is commonly called mystic poetry. The Sanyasin Shankra, while engaged in serious philosophical discussions about the Supreme Lord felt an inner urge to address the all-pervading Shakti in a different way. That is why he sang his famous Soundarya Lahiri, a song in praise of mother Goddess. And while dealing with the multifaceted Tantric philosophy, intricacies of language and aesthetics Abhinvagupta also composed many stotra with his devotional offerings to the lord were, not a discourse based on his logic and reasoning but as devotee who has completely surrendered his ego at her alter. Mere realisation of intimacy of his dear sent him "dancing, singing in ecstasy."[1] Only mystic about it is that the supreme being in the form of Brahma or Shiva is the central concern of this poetry. Since the subject determines the form and style of language the ideas, feelings and experiences of the poet are expressed with the help of spiritual and philosophical allegories and metaphors. He wrote in Sanskrit which in those days was the language of scholars. But in a couple of centuries the Shaiva philosophy percolated to the ground through local language of Kashmiri and attracted thousands of fertile minds. Early fourteenth century was the spring of this bloom of Kashmiri mystic poetry when great poet Laleshwari followed by her able disciple Nund Rishi tried to sooth the wounded minds of the common people.

When weapons and bigotry dominate the scene and determine the fate of people, the logic or reason is forced to recede to the background. Scholarship is suspect, and logic is blasphemy. In such situations, Bhakti movements are the way the societies try to preserve their cultural identities. These movements besides being reviving as well as reforming are resisting attempts in some ways also. When Laleshwari was born the Hindu society though still in majority was a rudderless ship with no sense of goal or direction. Suppressed by alien forces it had taken shelter in a self-woven web of rituals and social inertia. Laleshwari was born in a small village near Srinagar, close to the old ruins of the original Srinagar city built by Mauryan emperor Ashoka. Her childhood was marked by a series of tragic events. Born in poor family, she was married in a family where she had to face a

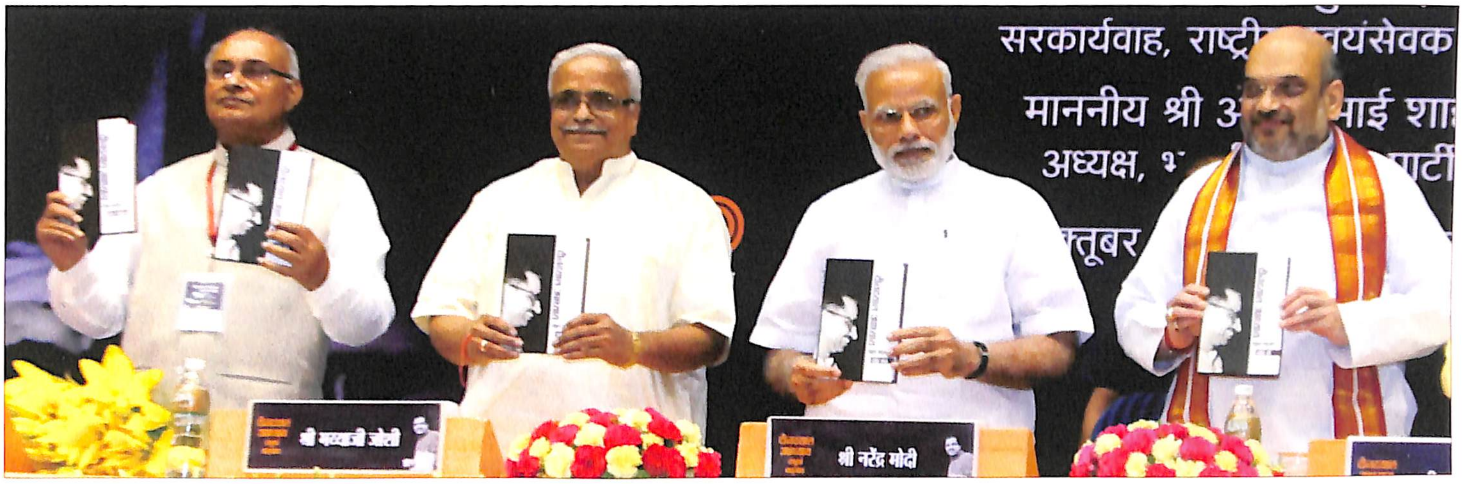
प्रभात
नवनूतन प्रकाशन की गौरवशाली परंपरा

दीनदयाल उपाध्याय
संपूर्ण वाङ्मय (पंद्रह खंडों का सैट)



संपादक मंडल

• प्रो. देवेंद्र स्वरूप • श्री रामबहादुर राय • श्री अच्युतानंद मिश्र • श्री जवाहरलाल कौल • श्री नंदकिशोर त्रिखा • श्री के.एन. गोविंदाचार्य • श्री ब्रजकिशोर शर्मा • डॉ. विनय सहस्रबुद्धे • श्री अशोक टंडन • डॉ. सीतेश आलोक • श्री आलोक कुमार • श्री बलबीर पुंज • डॉ. चमनलाल गुप्त • डॉ. भारत दहिया • श्री बनवारी • श्री हितेश शंकर • श्री प्रफुल्ल केतकर • डॉ. रामप्रकाश शर्मा 'सरस' • श्री अतुल जैन • डॉ. राजीव रंजन गिरि • डॉ. वेद मित्र शुक्ल • श्री राहुल देव • श्री उमेश उपाध्याय • श्री जगदीश उपासने • श्री सुशील पंडित • श्री ज्ञानेंद्र बरतरिया • श्री भरत पंड्या • श्री मुज़फ़्फ़र हुसैन • श्री प्रभात कुमार • श्री स्वदेश शर्मा



9 अक्तूबर, 2016 को नई दिल्ली के विज्ञान भवन में पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय जन्म शताब्दी वर्ष के अवसर पर डॉ. महेश चंद्र शर्मा द्वारा संपादित एवं प्रभात प्रकाशन द्वारा प्रकाशित 'दीनदयाल उपाध्याय संपूर्ण वाङ्मय' के पंद्रह खंडों का लोकार्पण भारत के प्रधानमंत्री मान. श्री नरेंद्र मोदी, राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के सरकार्यवाह मान. श्री सुरेश (भय्याजी) जोशी व भारतीय जनता पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष मान. श्री अमित शाह के करकमलों द्वारा संपन्न हुआ।

''यह पंडितजी की जीवन-यात्रा, विचार-यात्रा और संकल्प-यात्रा की त्रिवेणी है। यह दिन इस त्रिवेणी का प्रसाद लेने का दिन है। पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्यायजी कहा करते थे कि अपने सुरक्षाबलों को मजबूत किए बिना कोई राष्ट्र अपनी स्वतंत्रता को अक्षुण्ण नहीं रख सकता, इसलिए सुरक्षा-तंत्र मजबूत होना ही चाहिए। पंडितजी द्वारा कही गई बातें आज भी इतनी ही प्रासंगिक हैं।''

—**श्री नरेंद्र मोदी**, प्रधानमंत्री, भारत

''विचारों का छोटा सा बीज पं. दीनदयालजी ने बोया था, आज वह वटवृक्ष के रूप में खड़ा होकर न केवल भारत बल्कि पूरे विश्व की समस्याओं को सुलझाने की दिशा में अग्रसर है। उनका साहित्य उनकी सरलता, दूरदर्शिता और संकल्पशक्ति का परिचय कराएगा।''

—**श्री अमित शाह**, राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष, भाजपा

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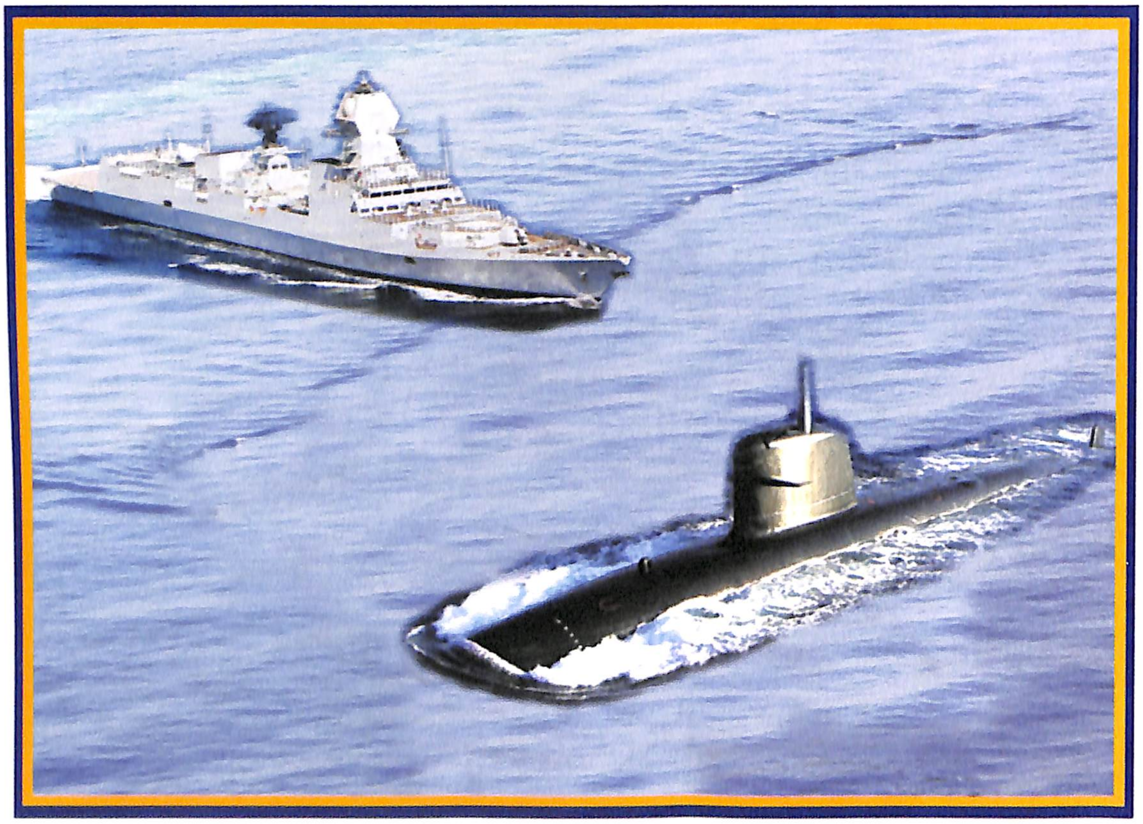
WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS



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hostile husband and merciless mother in law. Laleshwari found solace in the company of an elderly Pandit Shrikanth, who had attained highest spiritual qualities. He was a Shaiva Yogi who taught Lalla the essence of Shaiva philosophy. Armed with spiritual understanding Laleshwari like Meera left her home and started roaming as a wondering angle. "My Guru told not to wonder outside come in side. That sentence became my Vak and Vachan." What Guru wanted to convey to her was that the God she is seeking in external objects was in fact inside her, in her mind and body, not in places built by man, nor even in idols or Murtis. That sentence indicated the goal and the way to reach it as well. It was not an easy path to tread. Many a times she was worried about the way ahead.[2]

I lost my way while returning,
I have been walking from
dawn to dusk
And now can't find even single
penny in my pocket
How can I pay for crossing
the river?

Even while she is clear in mind about her goal and knows the way, yet she is not sure whether she can make it. She is afraid she may falter mid-way.

The sling of my candy load
is getting loose
My back has bent under
its weight
How shall I carry the load?
The word of Guru has become
a painful blister
I feel like a shepherd less flock

But when she realised that she is on right path and about to meet her beloved Shiva she regained her confidence'

I read all that has been written,
even that which has not
been written,
I brought down a tiger from
the forest
As if it was only a jackal,
I nourished and disciplined it,
And arrived at my goal.

Laleshwari mostly used the simple language for expressing her feelings, but sometimes her verses became so pregnant with spiritual and philosophical meaning that assumed the form of a riddle. She expressed her dilemma, in following way, which often baffles most devotees.

What can I do to these five, ten
and the eleventh?
These have violently stirred my
pot and left
Had these joined together,
Pulled a single rope
Why would all the eleven lose
their single cow?

Five are the Bhutas, ten are Indiriyas, and eleventh is the mind. Cow is the ultimate objective.

One can only achieve the Param Shiva if the all elements that govern our actions can work in unison, in controlled manner and direct the mind to a single path. Otherwise all the eleven wandered in different directions to find the lost cow but failed.

But she was not oblivious of situation around her, especially in her own community. She strongly opposed meat eating prevalent in her community.

This Sheep provides you cloths,
To cover your body and to
protect you from cold
The only thing it wants from you
is the grass to eat.
You fool, who told you to offer,
An animal as food for the stone
Idol?

It pained her that her own community had been mistakenly justifying the meat eating on the basis of Shaivism.

Laleshwari was followed by the great saint Nund Rishi. There is an interesting folk tale about the birth of this saint.

A baby boy was born to a farmer couple in a village, not far from Srinagar city. But the baby proved to be a difficult one. He refused to suck milk from his mother. His parents Salar and his wife Sadar Mal tried all the ticks they knew to make the baby relent. But the baby was not willing to accept the first meal they could offer. Neighbors too could not help. Suddenly an ill clad woman appeared at the doorway. They immediately recognised her . She was the famous wondering poet Lalla Mother. When she came inside the house she asked the Sadar Mal to handover the baby to her. When the baby was in her lap she pressed him against her own breast and whispered in his ear, "If you were not ashamed of coming here why be ashamed to take your drink?" The baby

Laleshwari found solace in the company of an elderly Pandit Shrikanth, who had attained highest spiritual qualities

started to suck obediently. This baby was none other than Nund Sanz who was later called Nund Rishi, who appeared to wait for his Guru to give him go ahead in this world.[3]

Nund Rishi was a product of his own time and socio-cultural circumstances. When he decided to adopt the name of Rishi he knew its real meaning. He was conscious that objections could be raised from the ruling elite in an age of an organised wave of religious conversion. He was also conscious of the fact that his own family had embraced Islam only a few decades before. Yet, Nund Rishi also valued very much his family's Hindu past and inheritance. So when he stated calling himself 'Rishi' or allowed his disciples to use that epithet for him, he was aware of the fact that he was reviving not only a word but a concept which he thought was needed in that turbulent times. And if he was not declared a heretic it was because by the time the rulers and the clergy started to notice him, he had become immensely popular among the rural folk – both Hindus and Muslims. It was easier to adopt him than to denounce him. He spent most of his youth in the caves in Kaimukh in meditation and fasting. It is said that he slowly decreased his food so much that he started living on whatever vegetation was available in the forest. He was a total vegetarian and remained so entire his life .There is a folk tale in which his mother is said to have tried to persuade him to leave the cave and come back home but he refused to do so. In a long conversation he is believed to have convinced his mother about his mission and necessity of suppressing his nafas (controlling his sensuous needs).

He belonged to a royal family of Kishtawar, a small valley in Jammu region. His ancestors were Rajput's who claimed ancient lineage of Suryavanshi kings. Sangram Singh was the first person in that family who adopted the surname of Sanz instead of Singh. The reason of this change is not known but the word Sanz in Kashmiri means preparation, arrangement or planning. The word is used in this sense today, but it is said in the case of Sangram Singh it may relate to management of forts. After Shahmiri rule in Kashmir kingdom of Kishtwar too ended.[4] It is important to note that Kashmiri saints and writers unlike most of the ancient Indian writers and philosophers did not shirk from identifying themselves and their family in their writings. Nund Rishi too has given his family tree in a very graphic manner emphasising certain points which he wanted to bring to attention. Nund Rishi gives details of his ancestors in following way:

My ancestor was Ogar Sanz
After him his descendent was Darptar Sanz
When the end came for Darptar
He left a son named Zanga Sanz
When Zanga Sanz was killed in a battle
He left behind his son Sahaz Sanz
Sahaz had several sons
But only one Garza Sanz survived
Garza Sanz had two sons, Salu and Salar
I, Nunda am the son of Salar

After giving his family tree, he makes it clear for all that he belongs to Sanz family and Sanz is his Kul.[5]

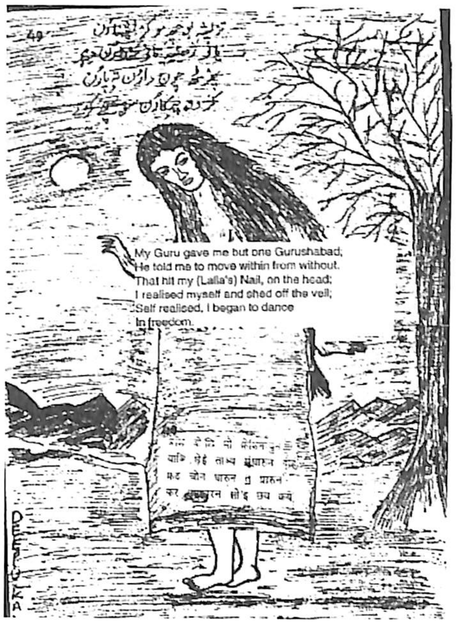
"Sanz is my father and Sanz is my mother, Listen you all! My Kul is Sanz only." It was a bold statement in an age of mass conversions[4]. He was not the one who disowned his past or his cultural heritage. In fact, he appears to have clear preference for the word Nund for his name. In one of his verses when he says his name is Nund, in order to emphasise it, he repeats the word three times – Nund, Nund, Nund. It is not surprising that in his Shruks, he never uses any other name except Nund for himself.

Was Nund Rishi a Sufi saint? In his poetry he hardly shows any knowledge of Sufi concepts nor the technical words associated with it. We have examples of several Sufi saints who wrote in Indian languages. Hindi Sufi poet Malik Mohmud Jaisi of Padmavat fame is an example[6]. In spite of Hindi being the language his poetry was full of Sufi terminology and concepts. But Nund Rishi's verses do not show any alien influence at all. In fact his own attitude to society, his concept of relationship with almighty God, his lifestyle and the many references to other

Nund Rishi was a product of his own time and socio-cultural circumstances.

Indian sects philosophies and concepts in his verses shows that Nund Rishi expressed only traditional Kashmiri knowledge. That is why he not only associated himself with ancient Rishis but also like Lalla, he adopted the ancient form for his poetry – Shruk, a Kashmiri adaptation for Shloka.

Yet the two saints – Laleshawri and the Nund Rishi – appear to have created a wave of disapproval against the strong armed method of conversion adopted by the ruling elite and the clergy. A web of incredible tales was spun through several books and accounts, including several Nurnamas written long after the death of Nund Rishi. Most of the tales try to show that Laleshawri was influenced by Sufi philosophy. According to a tale, when Lalla saw the Mir Ali Hamdani come down the road she ran away and hid herself in the hot oven of a baker. She did not want to face the Hamdani in her shabby clothes. When she came out of the oven, she was wearing golden garments. After this incident she became close to Hamdani and was guided by Sufi philosophy. They travelled to Arsh-i-majid after passing through the four Alams. It is also said that Hamdani, Lalla and Nund Rishi used to meet frequently to discuss Spiritual issues and even play the game of prophecies. Not only Lalla, Nund Rishi too have been shown to have received spiritual lessons from the Hamdani. Let us see what one of the earliest Persian Chronicle Waqiati Kashmir has to say about this fictitious episode, "...the story of her (lalla's) being present before His Holiness Sayyid Ali Hamdani the Second Ali, ... has not been held as proved by research scholars"


49
My Guru gave me but one Gurushabad;
He told me to move within from without.
That hit my (Lalla's) Nail, on the head;
I realised myself and shed off the veil;
Self realised, I began to dance
In freedom.

Lalleshwari (Born in 1320, died in 1390 A.D.), Born at Pandraethan village (ancient Puranadhisthana), Kashmir. (Image courtesy: koausa.org)

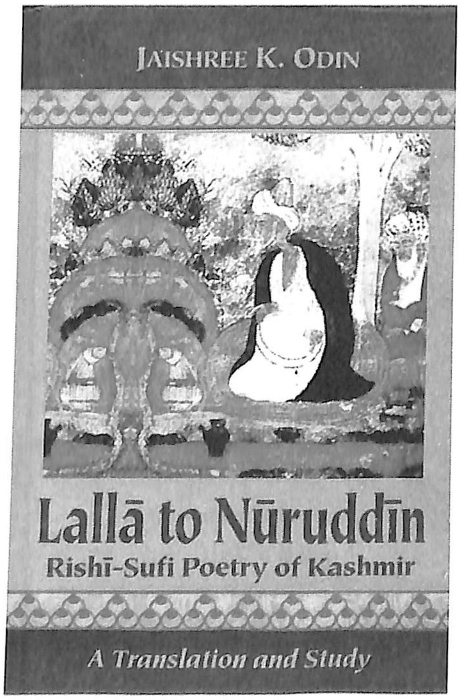
Two such Muslim scholars who could have been in touch with them were Hazarat Mir Ali Hamdani and Hazrat Mir Sayyed Mohmmad Hamdani. Which one met Nund Rishi and discussed theology with him is a matter of controversy.[7] First scholar and proselytiser Hazrat Mir Ali Hamdani came to Kashmir twice. His first visit was in 1372 when he was fleeing from the wrath of Amir Taimur who somehow had developed a hatred for Sayyeds. But he could not have met Nund Rish in this visit because Nund Rishi was not born then. Mir Sayyed Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir in1379 AD for the second time. But if he met Nund Rishi in his second trip the Nund Rishi must have been a child of two years. Several chroniclers, including Pandit Anand Kaul, have tried to resolve this problem by claiming that Mir Sayyed Ali Hamdani, by then known as Shah Hamdan, visited Kashmir third time in 1383. But this claim too does not seem to be any more rational than the previous two. Nund Rishi was a mere toddler then. A serious discussion can hardly be held with a child of that age. Of course Mir Sayyed Mohamnad Hamdani could have been the one who conversed with Rishi, because when the junior Hamdani visited Kashmir, the Rishi was about 24 years old by then. But it is surprising that Nund Rishi does show any knowledge of Sufism even in his later writings. Some fragments about their conversation in folk memory too do not indicate possibility of any serious debate. One such incident can illustrate the type of dialogue between the two. It is said that when Hazarat Hamdani met him, Rishi was accompanied by two women disciples. Hamdani Saheb seeing a very lean and physically weak person before him, Rishi asked, "Why don't you feed the horse properly in order to reach your destination(meaning why don't you eat properly)". Before he could answer one of the disciples replied, "He has already arrived where he wanted to go, he need not worry about the horse."

Kashmir was under the rule of Qutbuddin followed by his son Sikandar, who is called Sikandar Butshikan. But during the lifetime of Nund Rishi though several Kashmiri Hindus were converted, a sizable population of the Valley were still Hindus by faith. According to Muslim Historian Malik Haider,, "In that age of Qutub-ud-Din (1373-89) the majority of the people of this land were Kafirs."

Nund Rishi used the imagery from his experience of forming practices to great effect

Bhudhist influence could be seen in the religious practices, though Shaiva tradition was predominant. Kashmir had long tradition of tolerance of all religious viewpoints, many concepts of different religions were easily absorbed by the general public. Mystic poetry of Lalleshwari is fit example of this multidimensional popular religion of Kashmir just before Nund Rishi was born. Though Shaivite herself Lalla never hesitated to include Vedantic concept of Maya or a Buddhist principle in her verses. In an atmosphere of turbulence Nund Rishi, in order to strike a balance between the victor and vanquished sought the help of his heritage. And that is why he selected his message and the format in such a way that it appealed to people in general instead of clergy or ruling elite. In this endeavour, the Rishi found Lalleshvari as an able guide.

Nund Rishi believed in one God who is omnipresent and omnipotent. He is present in everything – animate or inanimate. God is supreme consciousness and is present in form of light or Prakash. Since He does not have any physical form or body one need not bother to worship him in Devalaya or a Masjid. Greatest truth is God himself. He believed in ancient Indian principle of Ahimsa, the non violence. He therefore renounced meat eating. He was a vegetarian all his life. He believed one should implement all his principles in his own life. It seems he tried to do exactly what Lalla once claimed to have done. "What I preached to others I first applied to myself." According to him, one should control his senses, especially taste and usually eat simplest of foods which is grown naturally in the forests. He believed in Yogic concept of Indriya Nigraha. In fact, he closed himself in a cave for years to control his senses of taste and hunger. Some writers see the elements of Hath Yoga in this. He believed that one can free himself from the dictation of senses by fasting. By claiming that he was the seventh Rishi he was only underlining the fact that he is not creating any new concept but is following an age-old tradition. It was his view that everything said or done before does not disappear just by changing the mode of worship of God. So he did not hesitate to call God as Deva or Shiva, besides Allah. His poems are his experiences, which he believe he must share with general public. Though detached from pleasures of world he is anguished to see the plight of poor people in his land and is forced to move out from his usual serene moods and mystic experiences. He looked like a revolutionary poet when he talks about his fellow farmers or poor and down trodden of Kashmir. Appealing for compassion by saying, 'If you can feed a hungry man, do not ask his caste', Nund Rishi used the imagery from his experience of forming practices to great effect.



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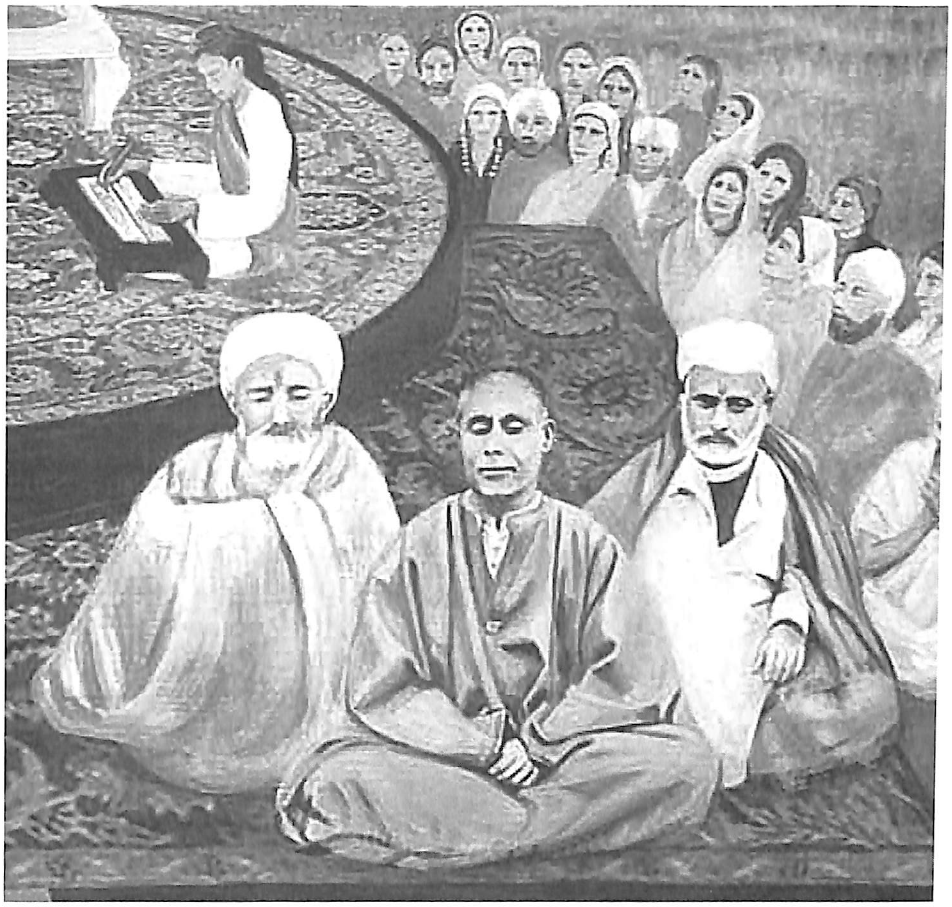
"Mullah is coming, look at his white turban, he is holding a big sparkling tram (a large service plate of copper which can serve several diners). Hear the sharp noise his paizars (a traditional shoe usually worn by Muslim gentry) are making hide your food grain." He was strongly against the exploitation of peasants in the name religion. According to him, like Lala, Shiva was not a stone Lingam. To Nund Rishi, fasting appears to be logical first step for Sadhana. God can be found in your own heart. One only needs to die before death because 'Shiv is both Tirth as well as death.' One must attain such a detached stage in which he can remain immune to the lure of world and the pain or pleasures attached to it. He did not want heaven which is traditionally the goal of most devotees, but Nund Rishi wanted union with his God. One can call it a Sufi concept of Visal-i-Khuda (union with the God).



Painting by Claudia Dose (Courtesy: lakshmanjooacademy.org)

But the way to achieve union with God is not Sufi, it is totally traditional Indian. This could be attained by self-realisation. The self realization becomes possible if one is the master, rather than a slave of his senses. He freely used the Shaivite terminology common in Hindus of his age and even advocated some Buddhist concepts such as Shunya. While paying tribute to Laleshwari at her death Nund Rishi said:

"Lalla of Padmanpur who after
drinking elixir (Amrit) of Shiva
Gulp by gulp
Finally attained his abode!
O Deva! Grant me the same
place which you granted her."

Although no historian noticed them except a few friends and disciples, but society hailed them as great saints or Auliyas and continued the tradition of Rishiyat Before the death of Nund Rishi he is said to have appointed his chief disciple named Nasaruddin Rishi to carry forward his movement. Nasaruddin was originally a farmer named Votur who had come to Nund Rishi for treatment. It is believed that Rishi had prepared four persons who could carry forward his mission of reconciliation and peace -Baba Bam, Baba Nasruddin, Baba Zainudin and Baba Lateefudin. But the ruling classes suspected them of anti-Muslim sentiments. There is a story about Baba Zainulddin Rishi. King Zainulabdin Badshah came on a visit of his Asthan but found there were no proper arrangements to receive him. He got angry and ordered that Zainudin should be deported to Tibet where there will be no disciple to pamper him. Years after his return from Tibet, he died in south Kashmir. An annual urs is held on *Vaishakh shudhi dwadashii*, a traditional calendar used by Kashmiri Hindus for religious customs.[8]

We don't know if the Rishis predicted future events. As far as Nund Rishi is concerned it appears a figment of imagination. But as a sage he could see the violence and intolerance sweeping his land. A saint who wanted to convert all swords into sickles was sad on the state of the social and political climate. In such situation his mind turned to his God and in anguish he called:

"Only you can help, O, Deva!
We urgently need you today!
Grant again this land her lost
beauty,
From the shadows of these
skeletons,
without ringing bells
only you Deva, can rise and tell
us the difference between Pap
and Punya"■

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Col Tej K. Tikoo, PhD

Ranjit Singh: The Savior of Kashmir

The Afghan occupation of Kashmir, which was brutal and oppressive, served as a catalyst for Maharaja Ranjit Singh to expel the invaders from the valley. It was Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali who brought Afghan rule to Kashmir (1753–1819 CE). His forces under Abdullah Khan Ishque Aqasi easily brought the valley under their control when Mughal rule in Kashmir was taking its last few breaths.

Though Aqasi himself ruled only for five months, he left behind a trail of terror and destruction. He handed over the charge of Kashmir to Abdullah Khan Kabuli, with Sukhjivan Mal, a Hindu Khatri adventurer, as his chief advisor. A local noble, Abdul Hassan Bandey, joined hands with Sukhjivan Mal to formulate a plan to rid Kashmir of the most ruthless and oppressive Afghan rule. Sukhjivan Mal was tasked to do away with Kabuli, which he did. Thereafter, Sukhjivan declared independence, with Bandey as his Chief Minister. But Abdali would not give up. He immediately sent Khwaja Kijah to regain control of Kashmir from Sukhjivan. However, Khwaja Kijah was defeated. Aqasi now decided to take matters in his own hand and he arrived personally to achieve what the Khwaja could not. But he too was defeated.

In a bid to gain time and strengthen his position, Abdali now declared allegiance to the crumbling, but still powerful, Mughal Empire. At the same time he resorted to a well-conceived strategy. Through his agent Mir Muqim Kanth, he poisoned the relationship between Bandey and Sukhjiwan. Taking advantage of the situation, Abdali sent a force in 1762 under the command of Nuruddin Khan Bamzai. A major part of Sukhjivan's force deserted him. He was captured, blinded, tortured and sent to Abdali at Lahore, where he was mercilessly killed under the feet of an elephant.

According to WR Lawrence[1] Afghan rule in Kashmir was a period of brutal tyranny which continued during the rule of Lal Khan Khattak (1762 CE) and Faqirullah. Amir Khan who replaced the latter did no better. He was Shia, and as cruel as some of the earlier Shias that Kashmir had known. His only worthwhile contribution to Kashmir was the construction of Amira Kadal, a bridge over the river Jhelum (Vyeth or Vitastaa).

Assad Khan, who arrived in 1784 CE, too continued with the policy of murder and plunder. He declared himself independent, taking advantage of the considerably weakened central authority in India. Ingenious methods were adopted to humiliate the Pandits. For example,

> In a blow to Afghan power, young Ranjit Singh, whom the Afghan King, Shah Zaman, had appointed as the Governor of Punjab, declared independence in 1801

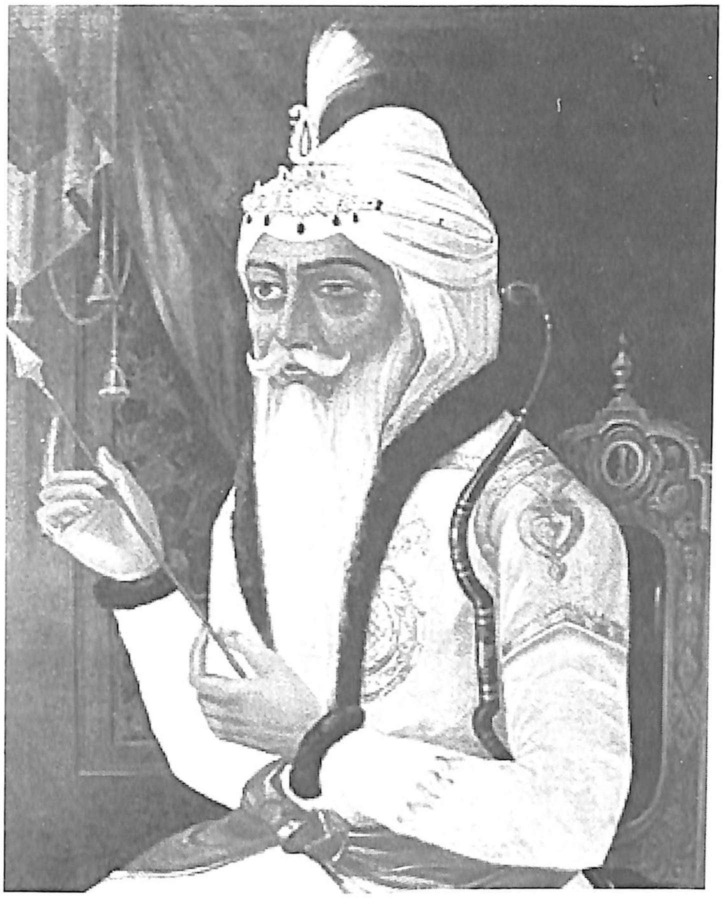
an earthen pitcher filled with ordure would be placed on the head of a Pandit and onlookers goaded to throw stones on the pitcher till it broke and the unfortunate Pandit became drenched with filth. He confiscated all Hindu scriptures and had a bund constructed with these along a tributary of Jhelum called Tschunth Kol, at present known as Suth.

When the Afghans got tired of killing Hindus with sword, they devised other methods. Hindus were tied up in grass sacks in pairs, and drowned in the Dal Lake. Mir Hazar, the Afghan governor, then replaced these hay sacks with leather sacks, to make the ordeal of Hindus even more horrifying. The place in the valley, where these horrendous acts were carried out, is still called Bhatta Mazar, (Graveyard of the Pandits, located on the track connecting Rainawari with Nishat over Dal).

To trample upon their dignity and humiliate them further, any Muslim could jump on the back of a Pandit and take a ride. This practice was called "Khos." Pandits were forbidden to put on shoes or tie turbans or use tilak mark on their foreheads. Many parents were compelled to shave off the heads of their daughters or even cutting off their nose and ears to prevent them from becoming the target of Afghan lust.

Thousands of victimised Hindus were killed or converted to Islam. Those who survived were forced to flee resulting in their sixth exodus. Many covered the long distance on foot, suffering untold miseries enroute. Due to their education and integrity, Afghans had found it useful to appoint Pandits as kardars, who were responsible for collecting 'agricultural tax' from the peasants on behalf of the governor.

A kardar would collect half the produce as agricultural tax, pay the Governor his dues and retain the rest. When produce was abundant, the kardar stood to gain a lot. But when crops failed, the kardar had to face the brunt of the governor's wrath. Such a state of affairs resulted due to the distant and remote location of the king, who ruled from Kabul and hence could not keep a close watch on Kashmir. Consequently, the governor was largely left to his own whims and fancies, allowing him to become autocratic and ruling with a heavy hand. When this happened, the kardars had to face immense cruelties. As a consequence, many of them migrated out of the valley.



A rare and historic painting of Maharajah Ranjit Singh (Image Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

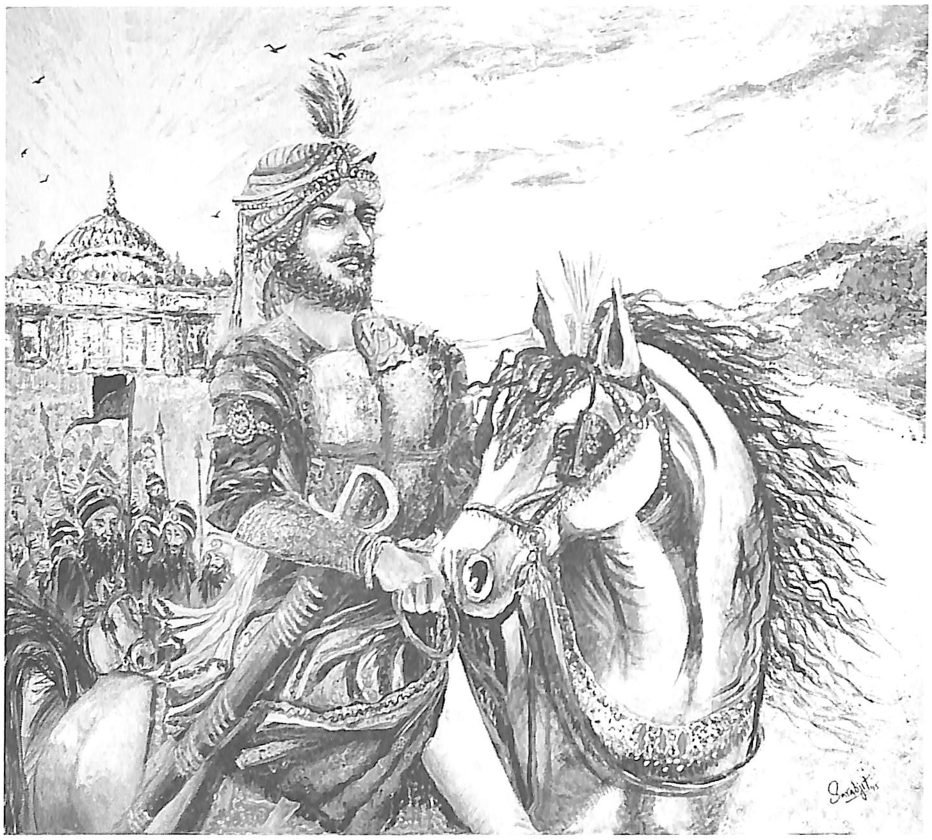
As many as 28 Afghan governors ruled Kashmir during the 67 years of their despotic occupation. It can safely be said that the corner-stone of Afghan rule in Kashmir was terror and the only legacy they left behind was their resort to brutality and savage torture. As one historian said, "they thought no more of cutting off heads than of plucking a flower." Most historians agree that it was the darkest period in the history of Kashmir even by its own standards of darkness, which it had seen in the past. Though almost all sections of people suffered at the Afghan hands, the main victims of their brutal rule were the Shias, Hindus and Bombas.[2]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh Intervenes

In the meanwhile, in a blow to Afghan power, young Ranjit Singh, whom the Afghan King, Shah Zaman, had appointed as the Governor of Punjab, declared independence in 1801. Soon thereafter, Maharaja Ranjit Singh became a powerful regional king. An interesting episode which had far-reaching consequences for Afghan rule in Kashmir and clearly establishes their unprincipled governance, cunning, avarice and greed, which formed the bedrock of their rule, is narrated here. Three distinguished Pandits, namely Sukhram Safaya, Mirza Pandit and Birbal Dhar had been appointed by Afghan governor, Azim Khan as revenue collectors.

Due to the failure of the crop, Birbal Dhar could not collect the expected revenue. The governor insisted that Birbal would have to pay one lakh rupees to make good the loss. In the coming few days, Birbal along with many other Pandits, was threatened and browbeaten. Expecting brutal reprisal in keeping with the Afghan track record, particularly in the existing intolerable conditions, some distinguished Pandits resolved to turn to the rising power of Sikh empire, headed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, to save Kashmir from further disaster. Accordingly, Birbal Dhar and his minor son, Raja Kak Dhar left for Lahore in disguise, with a petition signed by prominent Pandits, inviting him to take over the valley. However, the Afghan governor got wind of it. He unleashed a reign of terror and had many distinguished Pandits killed, their properties confiscated and jaziya imposed on them.

He sent his forces to look for Birbal Dhar but to no avail. He, therefore, turned his attention to the latter's wife and his daughter-in-law, who had taken shelter in the house of a trustworthy Muslim, Qadus Gojwari, on the advice of another distinguished and trustworthy Kashmiri Pandit, Vasakak Harkarabashi.



Painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by Sarabjit Singh

The governor tasked Vasakak to look for the two unfortunate women. However, even though Vasakak knew their location, he did not disclose it. All stratagems were tried to make him spill the beans, but he did not budge. A fine of rupees 1000 per day was imposed on him. Yet he maintained his silence. He was subjected to inhuman torture and untold atrocities, but it did not break his resolve. Finally, his abdomen was ripped open and he was brutally murdered.

Despite this sacrifice, Azim Khan succeeded in digging out the information about the secret hiding place of these unfortunate women from Birbal Dhar's son-in-law, Tilak Chand Munshi, who had learnt about the whereabouts of his mother-in-law and his sister-in-law from his wife. The older woman committed suicide by swallowing a piece of diamond and the younger one was violently converted to Islam and handed over to an Afghan noble who took her to Kabul.

Finally, came the turn of Vasakak Harkarabashi. His abdomen was ripped open and his dead body trampled upon. To quench his thirst for retribution, Azim Khan continued with the terror that he had let loose on the innocent and peaceful Pandits. In his paranoia he rounded up all those whom he suspected of being in league with Birbal Dhar. He sent them all to a concentration camp established near Nishat garden, where numerous atrocities were committed on them. The kind of torture inflicted on them knew no bounds.

Azim Khan left Kashmir in 1816 with 20 million rupees, leaving the Valley in the care of his younger brother, Jabbar Khan,

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➢ **खनिजों का निर्यात**
- लौह अयस्क, मैगनीज अयस्क, क्रोम अयस्क इत्यादि

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who perhaps, was the cruelest of all Afghan governors. As if this was not enough, between 1812 and 1816, many unsuccessful attempts were made by Shahmirs and Chaks to annex Kashmir. This resulted in continued strife which tore the fabric of Kashmiri society and left deep scars on it.

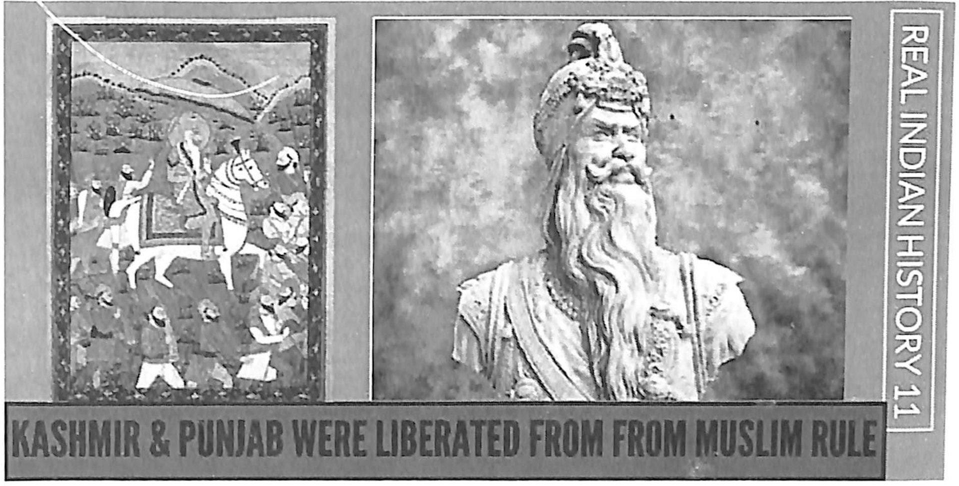

REAL INDIAN HISTORY 11
KASHMIR & PUNJAB WERE LIBERATED FROM FROM MUSLIM RULE

Image courtesy: pgurus.com

Birbal Dhar, in the meanwhile, succeeded in convincing Maharaja Ranjit Singh to annex Kashmir and bring to an end the cruel rule of the Afghans. He promised to compensate the Maharaja if the Sikhs were unable to take Kashmir. As a guarantee, he left behind his son Raja Kak Dhar with the king. However, the guarantee remained un-cashed as the Sikh forces finally entered the valley under Mirza Dewan Chand on July 15, 1819, and annexed the Valley. Jabbar Khan's defeat brought to an end the inglorious rule of Afghans.

The magnanimity of Kashmiri Pandits and their regard for religious tolerance can be gauged from some incidents that took place immediately after the Sikhs annexed the Valley. In those troubled times there appeared no guarantee for the safe treatment of Afghan women, particularly when seen in the background of the treatment meted out to Pandit women in general and to the wife and daughter of Birbal Dhar in particular.

However, Afghan women folk were saved only because of the intervention of an illustrious Pandit, Sahajram. On his advice they were sent to Kabul, escorted by Sahajram himself. That was how a Kashmiri Pandit saved the honour of Afghan women, when their own women had been treated so shabbily. Another incident concerns the impending demolition of the mosque of Shah Hamadan. Some Sikhs were determined to knock down this mosque. When Muslims learnt of it, they sent a delegation under Sayyed Hassan Shah Khanyari to Birbal Dhar to plead with him to use his influence with the Sikhs to dissuade them from going ahead with the destruction of this mosque. Birbal Dhar moved swiftly in the matter and convinced the Sikhs that it was not the right thing to do and thus saved it from being destroyed. Historian, GMD Sufi, acknowledges it to the lasting credit of the true character and nobility of the distinguished Kashmiri Pandit.

Subsequently, Diwan Moti Ram was appointed by the Sikhs as their first governor, with BirbalDhar as his Peshkar (Chief Local Advisor).

By the time Sikhs arrived in Kashmir, bulk of the population had embraced Islam (some estimates put the figure at nine-tenths of the total population). During their rule of the Valley for 27 years (1819–1846 CE), the Sikhs rescued the handful of Pandits from their oppressors. Initially, they were rather harsh towards the general population of Kashmir, whom they "did not consider anything worthier than cattle."[3]

However, the Pandits won a long-awaited respite, which served as a balm on their festering wounds. Some prominent places were restored to them. In the process, they partly regained a bit of their lost prestige and dignity. Banning of cow slaughter and renovation of temples sent a strong message to the fanatical elements which had tormented the Pandits.

In the meantime, natural calamities continued to keep their date with Kashmir. Sikh rule too witnessed its share of these calamities in the form of heavy and premature snowfall that destroyed almost the entire crop, giving rise to famine and outbreak of cholera. To add to

The magnanimity of Kashmiri Pandits and their regard for religious tolerance can be gauged from some incidents that took place immediately after the Sikhs annexed the Valley

Guru Tegh Bahadur's Sacrifice to Save Kashmiri Pandits

Some respite that Pandits had gained by the middle of 17th century cameto a sudden end with the ascension of Aurangzeb to the Mughalthrone (1658-1707). He was a religious bigot who sent his governors to the valley with the specific instructions to convert Kashmiri Pandits to Islam. Therefore, religious fanaticism and narrow mindedness were the two principal characteristics of his governors. Iftikar Khan, Muzzafar Khan, Nissar Khan and Ibrahim Khan, these governors unleashed a reign of terror on Kashmiri Pandits.

In order to escape their complete annihilation, a large number of Kashmiri Pandits, under the leadership of Pandit Kripa Ram left Kashmir to plead with Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the ninth Guru, at Chak Nanki, Kahlur, (now known as Anandpur Sahib). On 11th May 1675, Kripa Ram explained their dilemma to the Guru in the open Sangat at the place, where today stands Gurdwara Manji Sahib, in Anandpur Sahib.

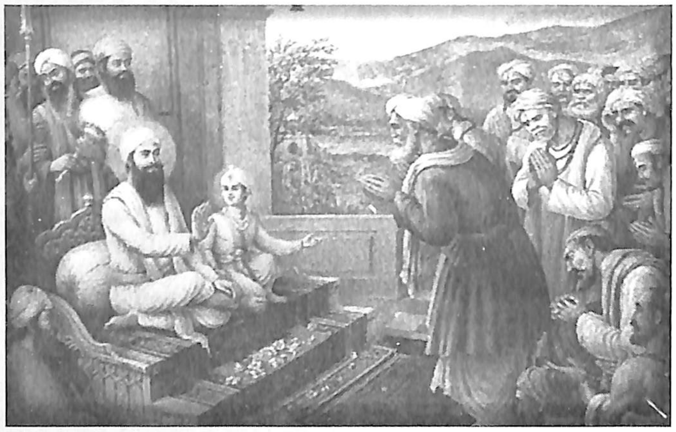
"The Emperor had given us some time to decide to convert to Islam or to be executed. The time for deciding has expired. Now, we have to convert to Islam or die. What shall we do? Guruji, we have no one else to turn to. We don't have an army to protect us. We need your help. Please assist us," said Kripa Ram.

Guruji went into deep thought on hearing Pandit Kripa Ram's request. At this point, Guruji's nine year old son, Gobind Rai, walked into the Sangat to see him in deep thought and asked his father the reason for it. Guruji explained the dilemma of the Sangat and said, "Some well-known great person (Mahapurakh) will have to make a sacrifice to stop this butchery. We have to find a supreme soul who will die so as to awaken the sleeping consciousness of the people of Hind".

"Pitaji, there is an easy answer to this problem. You are the most spiritually aware and great person in whole of Hind. You can make that sacrifice," answered Gobind Rai.

Guruji now addressed the Pandits, "Go and tell Aurangzeb that if he can convert Guru Tegh Bahadar to Islam, they will all convert. Otherwise he should leave them alone."

On 11th July 1675, Guruji left for Delhi. Enroute, he was taken into custody at Ropar on 27th July and then sent to Sirhind. On 9th November, his colleagues Bhai Dayal Das was put in a cauldron of boiling oil and two days later Bhai Mati Das was sawn into two pieces, while Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in cotton wool and set on fire. All these cruelties were perpetrated in front of Guruji to break his morale and will. But Guruji remained steadfast.



Guru Tegh Bahadur is inflicted with unbearable torture and pain for days in order to compel him to convert to Islam. But the great Guru refused to convert. Unable to break his will, he is finally martyred (beheaded) on 24th November 1675. But for Guruji's decision to sacrifice his own life, as also of his colleagues and grandchildren, Kashmiri Pundits as an ethnic group would have disappeared completely. Guru Tegh Bahadur thus earned the affectionate title of 'Hind-di-Chadar' or the Shield of India.

After Guruji's martyrdom, Sh. Kripa Ram joined his forces and fought the Mughals and eventually laid down his life along with 200 Kashmiri Pandits in the battle of Chamkaur.

- Manthan Desk

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh empire did not have a visionary and strong ruler to hold the kingdom together

the people's woes, it was now the turn of deadly plague to break out. This caused enormous loss of life, forcing large sections of people to migrate to the plains of India in search of livelihood.

During this period, Kashmir valley presented a picture of devastation, widespread starvation and abject poverty. Moorcroft, an English explorer, who visited the Valley in 1835, presents a grim picture of the conditions prevailing at that time. He mentions that only one sixth of the cultivable land was under crop, multitudes of people lacked the means of sustenance, villages had been deserted by most of the inhabitants and those who had been left behind, eked out a miserable living, with most of them resorting to begging as a means to survival. "Rural folk on the whole were half naked and miserably emaciated and presented a ghastly picture of poverty and starvation."[4]

Historical records make it abundantly clear that Sikh rulers were too preoccupied with the happenings in the Punjab and the goings-on at Lahore, to be distracted by the happenings in Kashmir, that lay on the fringes of their empire. These records suggest that Sikh rulers were harsh on Muslims; a result of the latter having collaborated with the Afghans in persecuting the Kashmiri Hindus most brutally. "The penalty imposed on a Sikh for slaying a Muslim was only twenty rupees."[5]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839, without ever having visited Kashmir, despite his strong desire to do so.

1846–1947 CE: Dogra Rule

For centuries, Jammu region consisted of a number of smaller principalities, constantly at war with each other. People living in one such hilly principality, located in the south-east, were known as Dogras. Compared to the indolent Kashmiris, Dogras displayed extraordinary fighting qualities. Raja Ranjit Deo, whose family had ruled Jammu region from 1742 to 1780, had brought 22 small Dogra chieftains under his control after the collapse of Mughal empire. The Dogra dynasty itself ended when it got irresistibly sucked into the rising Sikh power under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The re-emergence of Dogra rule in the Jammu region and its subsequent extension to Kashmir is intimately connected to the genius and cunning of Gulab Singh, who traced his ancestry to the family of Raja Ranjit Deo. An intrepid Rajput, Gulab Singh owed his meteoric rise to his gifted foresight and determination. He was a rare combination of a soldier and a statesman, who at an early age of 16 years, distinguished himself in the battle of Gumat (now part of Jammu city) during an attack by Sikh forces in 1808.Maharaja Ranjit Singh, taking note of his potential as a courageous fighter, took him under his wing. He also took Gulab Singh's brothers, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh in his employment. In 1819, Gulab Singh was granted a number of estates, including Jammu, by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was also granted the title of Raja that enabled him to raise his own force.

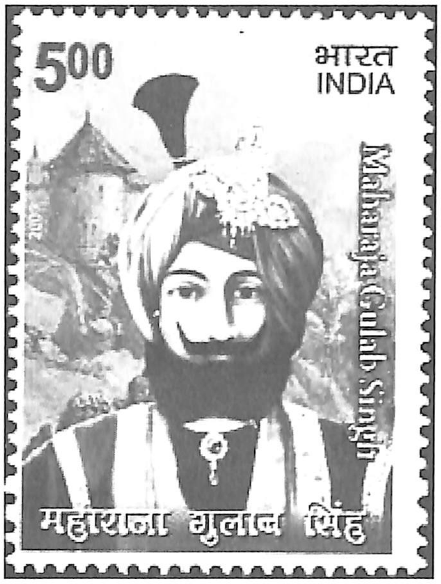
Gulab Singh made the best use of this generosity by bringing Reasi, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Chenani, and other smaller areas under his control by using all means. He further extended his territories in 1834, when his most brilliant soldier, General Zorawar Singh, brought Ladakh province into his dominion. At that time Ladakh was an independent kingdom under the suzerainty of Grand Lamas of Tibet. Later in 1840, he captured Gilgit, Baltistan and Zanskar regions.

Formation of J&K

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh empire did not have a visionary and strong ruler to hold the kingdom together. This resulted in the weakening of the Sikh empire at a crucial stage when British advance towards the north-west inevitably brought it in direct confrontation with the Sikh empire. On September 15, 1843, due to court intrigues and a scramble for power, the powerful and highly influential Dogra Wazir, Dhyan Singh was brutally murdered. Consequently, Dogras suffered steep decline in their prestige and influence. Efforts were also made to cut Gulab Singh to size. But he proved too shrewd for his opponents and turned this great adversity into an opportunity.

This situation was being closely watched by the British. The Dogras, Sikhs and the British, the three protagonists of this unfolding drama, had their own objectives. Their peculiar strengths and weaknesses had a deep impact on the interplay of forces let loose by the emerging geopolitical realities in the region. These peculiarities proved historically crucial. The British, imbued with a modern outlook, were better organised and were clear about their strategic objectives, which they had formulated with precision. The Dogras, under Gulab Singh, though feudal in their outlook and militarily ill-equipped, were tough, ambitious and well-prepared. Their biggest strength lay in being led by an able and experienced leader. The Sikhs, on the other hand, were brave but reckless. They had a fine army but were divided and weakened by factionalism, jealousy, indiscipline and lack of worthwhile leadership.

It was an opportunity that British had been waiting for in their quest of getting the whole of India under their sway. With considerable help from Muslims (which sealed the Sikh-Muslim animosity), the British finally confronted the Sikhs, resulting in a series of Anglo-Sikh wars. The Sikhs suffered a crucial defeat on December 13, 1845 at Har-ka-Patta and in the next battle, which was fought at Sobraon on February 10, 1846, Sikhs were comprehensively defeated and their empire virtually disappeared. The result of these wars was officially formalised by the protagonists by signing of two treaties; the first, Treaty of Lahore, was signed on March 9, 1846. Under this treaty, Sikhs were required to relinquish the Jalandhar Doab and both banks of the Sutlej River and further pay an indemnity of Rs 1.5 crores, failing which they would have to cede additional area to the British. The Lahore Durbar could not pay the full amount of the indemnity.



Gulab Singh sensed an opportunity by visualising the future scenario in the absence of Sikh empire and saw the benefits of making peace with the British. He therefore, came forward to pay Rs 75 lakhs (approximately, 1,15,000 US $ in present currency) on behalf of the Sikhs out of the above amount. This resulted in the signing of Treaty of Amritsar on March 16, 1846, by virtue of which, the British Government transferred 'ever independent possession,' of some of the ceded areas to Gulab Singh, in return for the above amount. These areas included the hilly tracts falling between east of Indus and west of Ravi Rivers and Kashmir. Thus, Kashmir passed into the hands of Gulab Singh, who became the first Maharaja of the Dogra rule in Kashmir.

However, the fact of the matter is that when Sikhs had conquered Kashmir, it was Gulab Singh who had done it for them. Therefore, he was the de-facto ruler of the Valley, which the Treaty turned de-jure. Francis Younghusband writes: "On the death of Ranjit Singh, there was much violence among the Sikh soldiers and the Governor of Kashmir was surrounded by them. Therefore, about 5,000 men, nominally under the command of Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh's successor, was sent to Kashmir to restore authority. This was the year 1841, when the British were still behind the Sutlej, but were engaged in the fruitless and disastrous expedition to Kabul, which resulted in the murder of their envoy. Gulab Singh quelled the mutiny in Kashmir, placed a Governor of his own and from this day became a virtual master of the Valley, though till 1846, it nominally belonged to Sikh rulers at Lahore."[6]

With Sikh empire in a disarray and Gulab Singh firmly entrenched in Jammu, the former could do little to rein in latter, who correctly assessed that aligning with the British was a far better option than confronting them on behalf of Sikhs. In the given circumstances, "Any sense of obligation he may have felt towards Sikhs for establishing his rule over Jammu vanished

Kashmir passed into the hands of Gulab Singh, who became the first Maharaja of the Dogra rule in Kashmir

before his realistic appraisal of the eventual outcome of the struggle."[7] Even though the Treaty had been signed and the mutiny quelled, another twist to the tale was yet to unfold. Due to internecine struggle among the claimants to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's throne at Lahore, Lal Singh of Lahore Durbar instructed Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the last Sikh Governor of Kashmir, not to hand over the possession of Kashmir to the Maharaja. However, Gulab Singh would have none of it. He sent a Dogra force, along with some British soldiers, under the young prince, Yuvraj Ranbir Singh, to subjugate the rebellious governor.

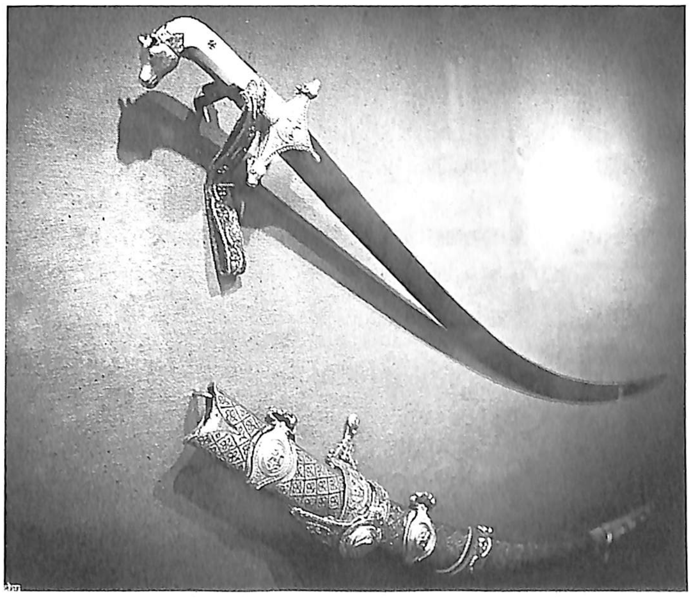
Professor Somnath Wakhlu writes, "The force came sweeping with relentless fury and the governor surrendered Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh; hence in a way, his conquest of Kashmir."[8] In due course of time, the state became one of the most important and the biggest princely states, with its Maharaja holding an honorary rank of Major General of the British Indian Army, who was entitled to a 21-gun-salute (one among five such rulers), whenever he visited a British army formation during the Raj.

It was widely believed that Gulab Singh had borrowed Rs 75 lakhs, to be paid to the British, from Diwan Jwala Sahai, a rich Punjabi from Aminabad. He was, therefore, indebted to the latter for having raised this amount at a short notice. Sahai then became the first Prime Minister of the state. His office remained hereditary for many years, thereafter. Consequently, Sahai and his successors imported many people from their own area to fill-up various administrative posts in the state. In due course, these people, locally called Khatri, inundated the Valley. In 1852, the British forced an officer on special duty on Gulab Singh, who now became the eyes and ears of the British and a virtual second centre of power. In due course of time, British Residents were also posted in Poonch, Ladakh and Baltistan.

Nevertheless, Maharaja Gulab Singh proved to be a tough administrator who restored law and order and instilled trust among the people in the administration. He launched a ruthless campaign against the lawless marauders like Galwans, Khokhas and Bombas and disciplined them with an iron hand. He introduced a number of reforms in the distribution of land and begaar (see n.13, p.47). He ensured that a shawl weaver was no longer a serf. The Maharaja also rationed the food grains, as its monopoly by some vested interests during times of scarcity, had created enormous suffering among the people. It was said of his times that, "a bride laden with jewelry could walk in the dead of night in a street of Srinagar without any fear."[9]

Maharaja Gulab Singh died in 1857, to be followed by Ranbir Singh. It was during the latter's rule in 1867, that British Trade Agency was established at Leh, the capital of Ladakh. This was done to establish British control over the trade routes to Central Asia.

Despite the Maharaja siding with the British and providing them vital assistance during the 1857 uprising, the latter surreptitiously incited the Muslim majority of the valley against their 'Hindu' Maharaja. Ranbir Singh, realizing the potential of this insidious propaganda, decided to shift his capital to Srinagar during the summer months. This would enable him to address their grievances expeditiously, besides creating a sense of belonging among the Kashmiri Muslims. In 1858, the capital shifted from Jammu to Srinagar for the first time, when the Maharaja moved there along with his retinue of nearly 200 people in summer. This shifting of the State's capital, known as Durbar Move, has now become a yearly routine. The state capital moves from Srinagar to Jammu in winter (first week of November) and returns to Srinagar in summer (first week of May).



The magnificent gold-mounted sword once belonged to Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Source: Pinterest)

Ranbir Singh was

followed by Pratap Singh in 1885. "In 1889, the British, wary of increasing Russian pressure towards the Pamirs, instituted the Gilgit Agency under the direct rule of the British political agent, and from that time Gilgit paid even less allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir."[10] Pratap Singh did not have a male issue of his own, which led to great deal of court intrigues. Coupled with the fact that Russian presence in the north was getting worrisome for the British, the Maharaja's rule was replaced by a council, which lasted till 1905, when the Maharaja was re-installed. A cart road was constructed between Jammu and Srinagar by Maharaja Pratap Singh, which served as his personal pathway to Srinagar. However, it was thrown open to public in 1922, and today, serves as the main link between Srinagar and Jammu.

Pratap Singh was succeeded by his nephew, Maharaja Sir Hari Singh Bahadur, in 1925. It was during his rule that Kashmiri Pandits became the vanguard of the movement that finally brought in the state-subject law. This movement, launched by Kashmiri Pandits, was mainly aimed to forestall any attempt by the British to acquire land in the state. Ironically, Kashmiri Muslims who consider the state-subject law an article of faith, opposed it tooth and nail. The monopoly of the administrative machinery of the state by outsiders had also created a strong resentment among the native nobility and the feudal class.

Sensing the political implications such an emotional issue would have for his rule in the state, the Maharaja acted swiftly. He promulgated a notification in 1927, which later became the State-Subject Law. This law created three categories of State subjects; category 'A' included those who were hereditary citizens of the state and had landed property. Category 'B' included those who came from outside, but had acquired landed property in the state, and category 'C' was formed of those people who were either employed in Jammu and Kashmir State Government Service or had been living in the state for the past ten years, but did not own any landed property.

Dogra rule witnessed significant developments in the field of communication. Many Post and Telegraph offices were opened throughout the state. The administrative machinery was toned up by completely overhauling it, wherever required. Criminal justice system too was modernised by applying British practices to the state with appropriate modifications.

Significant developments in the field of industry and agriculture during this period benefited all sections of the society. By now, British advisors were placed in various departments like, Army, Public works Department, and those dealing with State Accounts, Land Settlement issues, etc. However, the Maharaja was kept on a tight leash by the British who exercised strict control on his administration. It can safely be concluded that it now became a British-Dogra rule rather than a purely Dogra rule. ■

Contact: 9899656400
tk.tikoo@gmail.com

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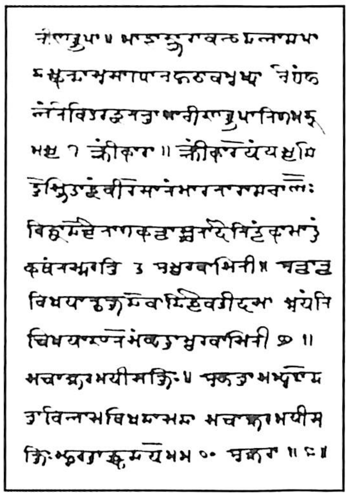
The Sharada Script

Prof. B. K. Kaul Deambi



Among the Western Himalayan scripts, the Sharada alphabet has a place of pride. Evolved from north western Brahmi a millennium ago in the 9th century A.D. it remained in popular use for several centuries in an extensive area of Western Himalayas including North Western Frontier Province, Dardistan, Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. The epigraphic and literary records written in this script, that have been found in these regions, have thrown light on many facets of the history and culture of the areas of their provenance.

The inscriptions of the famous Hindu Shahi Dynasty of Kabul and Ohind and of the Shahi Dynasty of Gilgit, bulk of extant epigraphic and literary records of Kashmir produced from 9th century onwards, the inscriptions including the copper plate charters, fountain stone inscriptions and the temple inscriptions of the erstwhile Western Himalayan States of Chamba and Kangra, and the legends of the coins of the Shahis, the rulers of Kashmir and Mahmud of Ghazni are written in this script. This fact considerably enhances the value of the study of this important regional alphabet for the critical study and analysis of the valuable record, written in this script and preserved in several celebrated museums and libraries of the world. Like the Brahmi and the Kharoshti in the ancient period, the Sharada script in the early medieval period formed a vital link in the chain of communication of ideas, knowledge, and culture among the states comprised in the Western Himalayan region. Unfortunately, the knowledge of this important script is fast disappearing threatening thereby the loss of this rich and proud heritage of Western Himalayas to posterity for ever.

As in this part of the country, the Brahmi (the well-known national script of ancient India) continued to be the popular mode of writing in Western Himalayan region throughout the ancient period. This is indicated by several surviving epigraphic and literary records discovered from different parts of the region. During the long period of its use the Brahmi alphabet passed through several stages of development and its characters assumed different forms in different areas of its use and by about 7th and the succeeding centuries the original appellation gave way to new regional denominations like Bangla, Oriya, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Nagari. These scripts though direct descendants of the Brahmi showed several characteristic peculiarities to justify new nomenclatures.

The Sharada was one such denomination. It evolved as a direct descendant of the Brahmi around 9th century A.D. and covered a vast region extending from Afghanistan in the north-west to Delhi in the south-east. Though its characters showed remarkable resemblance with earlier Brahmi characters in use in the region, they exhibited several peculiar developments positive enough to justify a new appellation.

The earliest known records in

Sharada evolved as a direct descendant of the Brahmi around 9th century A.D. and covered a vast region extending from Afghanistan in the north-west to Delhi in the south-east

Manuscript leaves of Atharvaveda in Sharada Script, IGNCA Collection

which the Sharada characters appear for the first time are the coins of the Utpala dynasty of Kashmir (9th century) and a brief record incised on the fragment of a broken jar discovered from the precincts of the Avantiswami temple and containing the name of Avantivarma (855-883 A.D.) the founder of the temple. Of about the same date is the Sarahan Prashasti of queen Somaprakha, spouse of Satyaki, a ruling chieftain of Sarahan opposite Saho in ancient Chamba (Himachal Pradesh).

Among the other records of slightly later date mention may be made of the Dewai (NWFP) inscription of the Shahi king Bhimadeva (10th century), inscriptions of the reign of queen Didda (A.D. 980/1-1003) in Lahore Museum and S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar, the Brahmor and Sungal (District Chamba, Himachal Pradesh) copper plate inscriptions of king Yugakaravarman and his son Vidagdhadeva, Barikot and Hund (NWFP) inscriptions from Hund including that of the queen Kameshwari Devi.

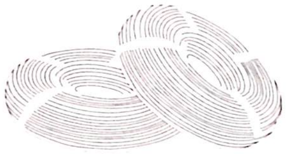
Sharada remained an alphabet par excellence of Kashmir till the present century and owed its name to the valley which from ancient times bore the alternative name of Sharada-desha and Skarada-mandala owing to its tutelary deity Sharada, the Goddess of Learning. The other name of the alphabet was Siddha-matrika by which name the script is referred to by Alberuni. This name is because the alphabet starts with the benediction Om Swasti Siddham. The alphabet continued to be used in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab up to the 13th century when it was replaced by its descendant, the Devashesha which in turn gave rise to the modern alphabets of Gurmukhi and Takari. In Kashmir, however, its use continues to this day though it is confined to the older generation of the priestly class.

Considering the extent of the region over which the Sharada alphabet remained in use for a long time, the number of Sharada epigraphic records discovered so far is by no means very large. Hardly one hundred and odd inscriptions have been discovered so far, 13 in north Western Pakistan, 34 in Kashmir, 6 in Jammu, 5 in Ladakh, 39 in Himachal Pradesh and one in Delhi.

Based on the Sharada characters used in these records three successive stages of development of the Sharada alphabet can easily be discovered. The earliest phase is represented by the inscriptions and coins of 9th-10th centuries, the second by those of the 11th-13th centuries and the third and final by the epigraphic and literary records of the 14th and subsequent centuries.

While the use of the Sharada alphabet in the inscriptions dates from the 8th century A.D. its use in the manuscripts, however, is not known earlier than the 12th century when we find it first used in a manuscript discovered from the village Bakhshali in the Peshawar district of Pakistan. The manuscript, the title of which is lost, contains an important work on Mathematics, but bears no date. On palaeographic grounds, however, it can be assigned to the 12th century. Next in date is an old birch bark manuscript of Munimata-mani-mala which is the earliest known Sharada manuscript discovered so far in Kashmir, assignable on palaeographic ground to the 14th century. The other early known manuscripts are the birch bark manuscript of Shakuntala, birch bark manuscript of the Adi and Sabha Parvan of the Mahabharata and the birch bark manuscript of Kathasarit-sagara, all assignable to 16th century.■

Courtesy: koshur.org



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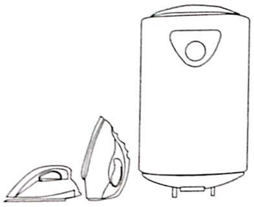

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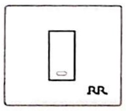

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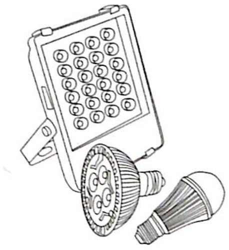

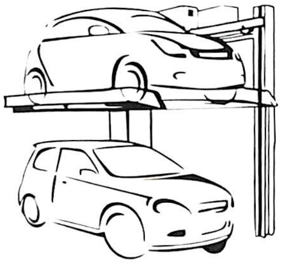

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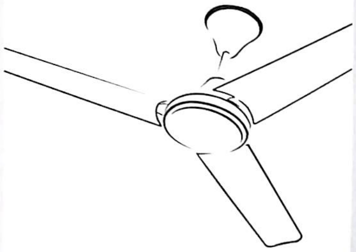
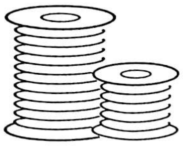


Fans

Winding Wires



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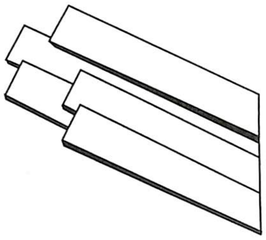

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